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AN EXAMINATION

OF

THE UTILITARIAN PHILOSOPHY.

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AN EXAMINATION

OF THE

UTILITARIAN PHILOSOPHY

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BY THE LATE

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PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

PROFESSOR GROTE died in August 1866, leaving to me the charge of arranging and editing his manuscripts. In the preceding year he had brought out the first part of his *Exploratio Philosophica, or Rough Notes on Modern Intellectual Science.* The readers of that book will remember the words in which he expresses his foreboding that he had little time remaining for work. 'I have arrived,' he says, 'at an age[1] at which a man begins to feel that, if he thinks he has anything to say, he must say it, without being too particular *how:* if it shall please God to give me opportunity, it is possible that some things said here confusedly may hereafter be put in a clearer form; but in the interim, as time is passing, it is possible that some things which I say may suggest thought in others, and what I see but indistinctly may be seen by them more clearly and put in a better and truer light.' It was in fact because he had been prevented from lecturing

[1] He was then in his 53rd year.

during the year by ill health, and 'wished to do what he could,' that he hurried on the publication of the *Exploratio*, and brought it out in a less finished state than might for some reasons have been desired.

The present volume is referred to in the Introduction to the *Exploratio* in the following words. 'After the publication of Mr Mill's small book on Utilitarianism, I had the intention of writing something in answer to him on that subject, and had actually begun the printing of the result of this intention. I was led, in connexion with this, to put together the intellectual views on which the moral view rested, which had something of the character of *prolegomena* to it, and had meant, if they should come within reasonable limits, to publish them in an Appendix.' He afterwards altered his mind, determining 'rather to put together, in an uncontroversial form, what seemed to me the truth, in opposition to what I thought error.' He goes on to say that this design 'is in the way of being accomplished, subject to all the delays which interest in other employments, uncertain health, and some not, I think, uncalled for scrupulousness and anxiety as to what one writes on a subject so important, may throw in the way of it.'

Further information is given in the Introduction to the *Examination* itself, from which it appears that the greater part of it was written as Mr Mill's papers

came out in *Fraser's Magazine* for October, November, and December 1861; 'but only as remarks of my own, without any definite view to publication.' After being put aside for a while, in the expectation that Mr Mill would publish his views 'in a longer and more elaborate form, of which the papers in Fraser might be taken as a preliminary sketch,' these remarks were sent to the press in 1863, upon the republication of the papers in a separate volume, the Author considering that Mr Mill thereby gave them to the world as the authentic exposition of his views upon the subject. The Introduction and the first seven chapters were already in print when the type was broken up in consequence of the change of plan already referred to.

Perhaps it may be well for me to explain here why I have thought it expedient to select as the first in order for publication of Professor Grote's manuscripts that one of which he had himself cancelled the proof. In the instructions which accompany his will he authorizes his literary executor to deal with his papers as he might judge best, and to select or alter at pleasure, suggesting however that they might 'all, or the greater part of them, be published in three divisions: first, and most important, *Miscellanea Ethica*, next, *Miscellanea Philologica et Philosophica*.' When the papers came into my hands I found a mass of manuscript written on various subjects and at various times up to within a few days of

his death; the great majority however dating certainly not earlier than his appointment to the Professorship of Moral Philosophy in 1855. Some of these consist of courses of lectures; more seem written for the purpose of clearing up his own views; hardly any are complete treatises, and none are prepared for publication.

My original intention, as soon as I had brought the papers into some kind of order, was to commence by printing the Second Part of the *Exploratio*, which the author had himself announced as speedily to follow the First Part, and for which materials exist sufficient to fill a volume. On further examination however these appeared to be of so fragmentary a nature that I thought it better to begin with something which had more approach to completeness. Besides this, though I did not feel myself bound to carry out the proposed division in three miscellaneous groups, which was evidently suggested with the view of saving trouble to the editor, yet the author's instructions left no doubt that his ethical writings were in his own view the most important; while they are at the same time written in a more popular style, and likely to interest a larger number of persons, than the *Exploratio*. I determined therefore to print first some of the later ethical writings; and of these it seemed to me that the best starting-point for the understanding of Professor Grote's views would be furnished by that which showed most

clearly their relation to the reigning ethics of Utilitarianism. If the 'uncontroversial statement,' alluded to in the Introduction to the *Exploratio*, had been completed, that might have superseded the necessity of publishing the present *Examination of the Utilitarian Philosophy:* but in the unfinished state in which the former has been left, it will certainly follow more usefully as a comment upon portions of the latter.

It remains for me to explain how far I have made use of the discretionary powers allowed me as editor. Those who have read the *Exploratio* will not require to be told that Professor Grote's style is sometimes careless, and sometimes harsh and involved. In some respects it curiously resembles that of one for whom he entertained a sincere admiration, though their minds were of very different character, and though he continually criticizes his writings—Jeremy Bentham. What is said of the latter by his editor might be applied to Professor Grote, that 'he left it to others to shape and adapt to use the fabric of thought which came out continuously from the manufactory of his own brain.' Thus we may in part account for the negligent colloquialism which appears in so many of his sentences, when we find him saying of himself (*Explor.* p. xxxii.), 'Reading and speculating, and even to a certain extent writing, on the subjects which the following pages concern, is something which is so much a pleasure to me,

whereas preparing for the press and publication is so exceedingly otherwise, that the hesitation which I have hitherto felt has a tendency to continue,' etc. His first object was to secure the thought for himself, not to put it in the most inviting form for readers. But in part his colloquialism was intentional. It was a rooted opinion with him that a man's style should be the most natural and immediate expression of his thought, and that there should be as much freedom in writing as in talking. I have heard him find fault with a style which had been praised as the perfection of clearness and accuracy on the ground that it wanted character and did not sufficiently shew the man. Besides this he had a special dislike to what is called the 'dignity' of history or philosophy, thinking that it kept people at a distance from the actual facts. Thus in one of his Lectures he says, 'The words and language I shall use will be such as seem to me most free from ambiguity, and most distinctly to convey my meaning, whether or not they are the most elegant, or the most in common use.' And again, 'I have avoided, where I could, old or regular philosophical terms, because in reality one of the greatest difficulties in philosophy is the uncertainty and vagueness with which they are used.' For the same reason he, like Bentham, frequently coins new terms; as in the *Exploratio* we have *adstance, biobjectal, cosmocentric, relativism;* and in the present book *unitary, ra-*

tionary, hedonics, intuitivism, etc.; 'not,' as he says, 'that I have any intention of making new words for what lexicographers may call the English language; I merely give defined terms to express certain relations of thought:' and he even recommends his hearers, 'instead of following his nomenclature, to make their own for themselves in the best way they can.' In another passage he states more at length his reason for abstaining from the use of the ordinary technical terms: 'I have done this designedly, not because I at all wish to appear to differ from others where perhaps I do not, but because I think that it would often be better for those who really take pains to find out an author's meaning in philosophy, if he would use terms of his own, rather than terms of common philosophical use, which he takes for granted the reader will understand. No doubt the reader will understand them in a way, and will very likely get on more smoothly than if the terms were as I recommend; but I think it very doubtful whether the reader will understand them in the author's way, or all readers in the same way; and the result will be unsatisfactoriness and confusion.'

One other point in which Professor Grote's style resembles that of Bentham deserves mention here, namely, the manner in which qualifying clauses are combined with the principal sentences. Of the former no less than of the latter it may be said, that 'he could not bear, for the sake of clearness and the

reader's ease, to say, as ordinary men are content to do, a little more than the truth in one sentence, and correct it in the next. The whole of the qualifying remarks which he intended to make, he insisted upon imbedding as parentheses in the very middle of the sentence itself.' (Mill's *Dissertations*, Vol. I. p. 391.)

Such being the peculiarities of the Author's style, the smaller changes which I have made have been chiefly with the view of simplifying constructions, and pruning away unnecessary roughnesses, wherever this could be done without injury to the characteristic flavour. Thus I have continually changed relative into demonstrative clauses, and in general have omitted qualifying clauses when they could be naturally supplied from the context. As I have had the advantage of working with the constant advice and cooperation of one who was most intimately associated with Professor Grote during the latter years of his life and had the most familiar knowledge of his modes of thought and expression, I trust that, in my endeavour to facilitate the reading of his book for the general public, I have not really sacrificed anything which would be regretted by the nearer circle of his friends.

In making larger changes, such as breaking up and rearranging or omitting paragraphs or chapters, I have been guided partly by the author's own practice, as shown by a comparison of the MS. of the

Exploratio and of the first seven chapters of the *Examination* with his own printed text; but independently of this, I have not scrupled to make any alteration by which it seemed to me that the connexion of ideas would be brought out more clearly. The reader may be interested to compare the order and the titles of the chapters after the seventh, as they now stand, and as they are given in the MS. The earlier chapters, having been printed under the author's supervision, I have retained in the order in which he placed them. It must be understood that in general the chapters were sewn up separately as independent Essays, but bearing their number and title.

MS. Ch. 8. No title.

This chapter is broken up. It seems to have been an earlier sketch of those which follow. Portions of it are incorporated in ch. XV. and ch. XVI.

MS. Ch. 9. *On the Real Bindingness of Duty.*

Is printed as ch. VIII., with the title *Duty and the Utilitarian Sanctions.*

MS. Ch. 10. *The Utilitarian view of the Bindingness of Duty.*

Printed as ch. IX., with the title *Duty and the Utilitarian Justice.*

MS. Ch. 11. *Comparative Importance of Duty, Virtue, and Happiness, in respect of the Moral Sentiment and of Practice.*

The first part is printed as ch. X., with the title *The Moral Sentiment in its Relation to Happiness, Virtue, and*

Duty: the latter part is incorporated in ch. XVI. and ch. XX.

MS. Ch. 12. *On the Position of Utilitarianism in the History of Philosophy.*

Printed as ch. XV. with the same title. Part is inserted in ch. XVI.

MS. Ch. 13. *On the Method or Scientific Character of Utilitarianism.*

Printed as ch. XVII.: part inserted in ch. XVIII.

MS. Ch. 14. *The Practical Character of Utilitarianism, or its Relation to what is needed at the Present Time.*

Printed as ch. XVI., *On the Practical Character of Utilitarianism, or its Relation to what is needed from Moral Philosophy.* The latter half inserted in ch. XXI.

MS. Ch. 15. *Moral Imperativeness, or the Relation of the Moral Ideal to the Positive and Observational.*

Part is printed as the Appendix to ch. IV., *On the Utilitarianism which is Common to all Moral Philosophy.* The rest is divided between ch. XII., *Moral Imperativeness as based upon Psychological Analysis,* and ch. XIII., *Moral Imperativeness as based upon Ideality or Belief in Higher Fact.*

MS. Ch. 16. *On the Relation of Morals to Religion.*

Printed as ch. XIV.: part inserted in ch. XXI.

MS. Ch. 17. *Various Final Considerations.*

Part is incorporated in ch. XX., *On the Claim of Utilitarianism to be the Morality of Progress;* part in ch.

xxi., *What are the Requisites of a Moral Philosophy at the Present Time?* part forms the Appendix to ch. xii.

MS. Ch. 18. *Nature of Human Progress.*

Divided into ch. xi., *The Ideal Element in Morality in its Relation to the Positive and Observational,* ch. xviii., *The Philosophy of Progress:* ch. xix., *The Morality of Progress.* Part is inserted in ch. xxi.

These changes are to a certain extent in accordance with a subsequent note of the author which gives the following arrangement of subjects:

Preliminary Review of Mr Mill.
Philosophical Utilitarianism: Happiness.
Distribution of Useful and Beneficent Action: Duty.
Disposition to consult Happiness beyond our own: Virtue.
Moral Idealism and Imperativeness.
Utilitarianism from point of view of History of Philosophy, and Scientific Method.
Utilitarianism from point of view of Human Progress or Improvement.

In making the changes referred to I have occasionally found it necessary to add a connecting clause. Where this extends to more than a few words I have distinguished it by enclosing it in square brackets. Other additions of my own are the Table of Contents, Marginal Summaries, References, and Occasional Notes. The latter are marked with

figures (and, where they go beyond a mere reference, are signed *Ed.*) to distinguish them from the author's notes, which are marked with the asterisk, obelus, etc. The references to Mr Mill's *Utilitarianism* are to the 1st Edition.

I cannot conclude without expressing my warmest thanks to my friend Mr Hort, to whom I am indebted for most valuable assistance. In the midst of pressing literary work of his own he has devoted many hours to the examination of the proof sheets as they were passing through the press, and has thus helped to make this a more worthy memorial of one to whom we are bound by the ties of a common reverence and affection, who was as careless of his own fame as he was always prompt to recognize and encourage the efforts of others.

May, 1870.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE purpose of the following pages is to show that, though virtue or right action is the great source of human happiness, still the fact that it is so does not of itself constitute it virtue, or explain what we mean when we use that term. The doctrine here controverted may, roughly speaking, be called Utilitarianism. Against this doctrine, or in qualification of it, I have endeavoured to show what in my view is the manner in which we ought to regard the fact that virtue or right action is promotive of human happiness, and what other considerations or elements of moral value ought to be taken account of in conjunction with it.

By the side of this discussion I have placed another, with the view of showing that though man, if we look at his past history, has proceeded along a course which has been one of real improvement, still it is not from the fact that such and no other has been his course, that we are able to judge that it is improvement, but we must further be able to give reasons why we call it improvement rather than the opposite. That is to say, we must have the *idea* of improvement: an idea of what *ought to be*, or

what it is desirable *should be*, as well as a power of observing, recording, and analyzing what *is*.

What in this latter point of view I have controverted is a way of thinking about morals, which may be roughly called by the name *Positivism;* by which I mean the line of thought which endeavours to construct a system of morals, or something to supply the place of one, from observation and experience of fact alone, without any previous assumption or idea. This, we are told, is the course which has been pursued with other sciences, and which ought now to be pursued with moral science, if it is to exist as a science at all.

I have endeavoured to show that on the ground of simple experience and observation, without something which our mind must superadd, there is no basis, in reference to the past history of men, for any real notion of improvement: nor any basis, in reference to practical morals, for even that modified degree of imperativeness with which, on the system which I have above called utilitarianism, right action or virtue commends itself to us. Something beyond experience and observation is needed for any form of moral science, and therefore the profession on the part of any proposer of such a form, that it keeps itself to observation and experience alone, is nugatory.

Moral science is thus, even in the most rudimentary notion of it, not a science only, but an art, the 'ars artium,' the art of life: it is of no use even entering upon our observation in regard of it, till we have made up our minds what it is we want. We are not simply speculators in it, but are aiming at something, we must know what. Moral science in fact implies the having an ideal in our minds of human nature and human life by the side of our experience and observation of them. And if we are to have such an

ideal at all, we may as well have it a full, complete, and worthy one.

Utilitarianism endeavours to a great extent to take a middle place, as to moral science, between positivism and idealism, (if we use the latter term to express the assumption of an ideal or something beyond experience). Professing to keep to fact and observation, it understands by the name of 'happiness' something which it (really) not only shows that men try to gain, but assumes it is desirable they should. This therefore is with it an ideal; and according to the manner of dealing with this, the utilitarianism is of different kinds. But in all its forms, it more or less, while disclaiming idealism, borrows a great deal which belongs to idealism alone. By an ideal we mean something which we ought to aim at or try to produce, and the notion of an ideal involves the notion of one line of conduct rather than another being of itself imperative upon us or at least desirable for us. Utilitarianism, without sufficient care whether its chosen ideal is a complete one, invests it with all the characters of a complete one, and pronounces, first, that such conduct as tends to produce happiness is conduct which is imperative upon us, and next, that it is the only conduct which is so.

Against this I have maintained that, though observation and experience are all-important for moral science as for other sciences, yet the profession of exhibiting a positive science of morals, differing in its method from a supposed *a priori* one, is vain and unmeaning; because all moral science, to have any value, must begin with assuming that there is something imperative upon us to do, or desirable for us to do; must begin, that is, with an ideal: if it does not make this assumption, its real course is the exceedingly unphilosophical one of beginning with

describing what man *does* do, and then, by degrees and unauthorizedly, altering its language and speaking of this as what he *should* do or *ought to* do. And if utilitarianism makes the above profession, it stands in a position, I have endeavoured to show, between positivism and idealism, in which it has the merits, if merits they are to be called, of neither: it is not true on the one side to its scientific profession, and on the other it fails altogether to give us an ideal of human action which meets our expectation and our reason, and a view of human life which we can recognize as a sufficient one.

I have endeavoured to exhibit as well as I am able the other considerations of moral importance, or elements of moral value in conduct, which require to be taken into account in conjunction with the consideration of its tendency to promote happiness, in order that we may form a right moral judgment about it: and to exhibit also the relation of each of these to the others. I have shown that the most intelligent and energetic determination to do nothing but what is useful or productive of happiness (and this is what the utilitarian inculcates) will not at all settle the question, *whose* happiness it is that we are to try to produce: that the most important points of moral difficulty arise not in reference to the question about actions, whether they are useful or not, but in reference to the question, *who* it is, in the conflict of various interests in life, that they are useful to. While the utilitarian, both by his profession and his self-chosen name, marks that the chief purpose of morals is to teach us to do such actions as tend to promote happiness, I have endeavoured to show that the name of *virtue* properly belongs to something more particular than this,—to the next step, if we like so to speak,—namely, to the doing such actions as

tend to promote the happiness of others and of the public in distinction from our own: and to show that there must be involved besides in our ideal of right action a notion of the right *distribution* of action among the various possible objects of it, which notion I have called by the name of *duty*. And not only are there thus other things to be considered in reference to right action besides the fact of its production of happiness, but the nature itself of the happiness is to be considered: we have not at all as yet established a firm ground for moral science by imagining an ideal of the desirable for man, and calling it happiness, if of this happiness itself there may be an ideal, one sort more desirable than another, so that it is as much the part of virtue to try to elevate the character of human happiness as to act for the production of it. We must then have principles to go upon in judging as to different utilitarianisms which set before us different ideals or heights of happiness, and we have to pass from resting in the consideration of happiness itself to the consideration what gives to *it* its value.

The question between the positive and the ideal, what is and what should be, observation and experience on the one side and the thought of something as desirable or imperative on the other, presents itself not only in reference to the scientific foundation of moral science, but through all the carrying of it out: and I have had to speak of the failure of utilitarianism in reference to this also. I have endeavoured to show the doubleness of view which belongs to moral science throughout: of a something which is, is observed, is felt; and a something which should be, which *is*, we might perhaps say, in a different and higher manner than the other, guiding action through the agency of our freedom in a course

different from that to which the other would incline it. But I will not anticipate further.

Only at the least to say this: I have spoken a little about the exceedingly difficult question of the relation of the positive and the ideal to each other, with a view of showing that I regard moral science, as much as any one can do, as a science of experience and observation, and consider that no want can be greater than that of the proper application of these to it. But moral science, if it is a science at all, must be a science of a higher order than simply positive sciences are; the word 'higher' not here denoting superiority, but something analogous to what mathematicians mean when they speak of higher powers, degrees, &c. Its subject being human choice or liberty, the world immediately before its view is not the world of that which *is*, but of that which *may be*, and its task is to find in this that which *should be* or which *ought to be*. Its observation therefore of that which exists, which cannot be too extensive and accurate, is subservient to a further purpose, and much which positive science, as it has attained to clearer views, has thrown off, must not be thrown off here. We must try to enlist more of positive observation in the service of moral science, without thinking that by this we in any way alter the essence and principle of this latter.

I have described rather what this Essay has turned out to be, than what in its earlier portions it seems to profess to be, and must apologize for much that is defective in the form of it, as well as for something of repetition, and something of confusion. This last does not, I think, arise from confusion of thought (if I had thought so, I should not have published the Essay), but from the great difficulty of digesting under separate heads the various things treated of,

which interlace in many ways with each other; and from the fear lest the attempt to do this might hinder in any way, what I consider of more consequence than completeness of form, namely, the simple expression of what I think. I have such a strong feeling of the injury which has been done to moral science by the attempts of writers to isolate the different portions of it from each other, for the purpose of exhibiting them the more clearly, that while fully recognizing the importance of this, if one can but do it well, I have in the present instance preferred to take but little pains about it. What I have most dreaded, in the interest of truth, has been lest anything that I have said should appear to have a completeness which does not belong to it, and lest I should bar up any ways in which the thought of any interested in these subjects might otherwise tend to expand itself. I had much rather that what I have said should be suggestively unsatisfactory than unfruitfully satisfactory.

My subject is not one which I should have written upon without having thought a good deal about it, and without considering that I had really something to say about it; but I have not sufficient respect, in a scientific point of view, for the moral systems which are past to have any ambition to add one to the number. My idea of moral philosophy is much more as of a thing which we all think and talk about, but often exceedingly foolishly and badly, so that what we want is good sense, discrimination, and wideness of view, than as of a thing on which our minds are free and unoccupied, so that what we want is to have it set before us in the best systematic form for our holding it. It is right manner of thought that we want about it, more than systematic knowledge. I think I have sufficient intellectual love of discussion, and care for truth, not to feel hurt at being

set right, and at anything which I may have said wrong being answered: but were this not so, on moral science at least, that eternal battlefield, I have not the slightest hope, at this time of day, of saying anything incontrovertible. I look with a kind of wonder at the positiveness of assertion with which some of those, whose doctrines I shall treat of, have spoken, and am led to hesitate whether any, who can have seen such a very little way around them, have *a priori* much claim to be listened to. But I feel strongly that if it is foolish to speak dogmatically about these much controverted topics, it is worse to speak about them, of set purpose, merely inconclusively and sceptically; there is no pretension to wisdom more fallacious than that which is furnished by this latter course.

Mr Mill stands at the head of a line of thought which I have for some time wished to controvert as in my view erroneous, though I have had, and have still, hesitation in writing on these subjects, a hesitation which the last preceding paragraph may explain. The present Essay commences with, and more or less embodies throughout, a critique of his papers on *Utilitarianism* which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* for October, November, and December 1861. As they are controversial in form, I have thought it a thing not unreasonable, and which ought not to give any pain, to controvert them; I am glad however that they belong to a different style of controversy from that which characterizes the articles in review of the works of Professor Sedgwick and Dr Whewell, republished since with other Essays by Mr Mill. Considering that moral science is to teach us our duty, one might wish that controversy in regard to it could give the example to other controversy of the tone in which such discussion should be conducted, and could take

the lead in introducing a kind of *jus belli*, as it were, which might mitigate, if it could not put an end to, the inevitable harshness of dispute. The 'odium ethicum' is even more unreasonable than the 'odium theologicum.' The cessation of it would be, I think, an advantage, not only to our tempers, but to the interests of truth and the progress of moral science. But these things are past, and I merely refer to them. The hard words bandied between utilitarians and their opponents fifty years ago may freely be considered, to use a manner of expression which I am not fond of, an anachronism now.

The greater part of the present Essay was written at the time of the appearance of Mr Mill's papers in *Fraser*, but only as remarks of my own upon them, without any definite view to publication. I thought it not improbable that Mr Mill would publish his views on the subjects here treated of in a longer and more elaborate form, of which the papers in *Fraser* might be taken as a preliminary sketch: and in this expectation, acting to augment my general disinclination to write on the subject, my remarks were for a time put aside. As however he seems, by republishing the papers in a separate form, to give them as the definite expression of his views, I have taken the remarks up again, and now submit them to the reader's consideration.

As I profess myself uninterested to defend any school, as I have no wish to originate any school of my own, and yet have strongly denounced, as unworthy of reason, the writing merely to profess inconclusivism and scepticism, the reader may ask why I should say anything, and may think it can only be from the unworthy motive of criticizing and cavilling at those who *have* something to say, and have a school which they wish to defend.

I answer: there seem to me to be two manners of thought belonging to moral philosophy, each in its way good. The one is that which (carried out wrongly and to extremes) I have alluded to in the following pages under the name of *sectarian*, but which need not be so carried out. New, or apparently new, moral theories constantly form a centre of attraction and a bond of brotherhood, tending in this way to stir up the minds of many, and to draw out both their intellectual powers and their moral emotions. No such community can exist without stimulating opposition: but by this opposition the feeling of community is increased, and the general interest in the subject heightened. Times of mental stir and controversy of this kind have their own value in the history of thought, and in some respects those are to be envied who live in them, and are drawn to others by the ties of mental brotherhood which 'communes inimicitiæ' produce. But the controversy of such times, while of value for the energy of thought which it calls forth, and the sparks of undying truth which are thus struck out, is injurious to permanent truth on account of the wild misconception of what is said by opponents, the false issues, and the little real *meeting*, consequently, of argument. It must be so: for if people studied the works of their opponents more, they could rarely be as singleminded in their allegiance to their own school, and as loud and demonstrative in their attachment to it, as they are wanted to be.

I seem to myself to trace in Mr Mill's papers three veins of thought: something of a loyal and traditionary attachment to a now waning school, that, namely, which I have called 'the old utilitarianism,' (old, because things now get old soon): something of a welcoming, but with hesitation, of a more

rising school, the sentiments of which I have had in my view in what I have said about 'positivism;' and besides these, if I might so guess, the spirit of a genuine philosopher distrusting considerably both of these, and extending much beyond them, but endeavouring to make the best of them, and importing into them much that is alien to themselves.

Now, in a state of philosophy such as exists at this time, it seems to me that there is another way of studying it more useful than that which I have described above; it seems to me that it is more helpful to the cause of truth that we should not make much profession of belonging to one or another school, of defending this school or that, when after all we shall very likely be but half-hearted disciples. A time like the present, when, as many at least think, philosophy is rather dull and quiet, and those who care about it are not numerous, is not a bad opportunity, before some fresh school springs up with energetic apostles, for dropping sectarian names for a while, in order that we may be able the more quietly to study the exact nature of the things which they represent. And in the absence of such names, and in the comparative (controversial) stillness of the air, I think people might more easily, if they would try, get an insight and a view for themselves. There is less dust about, less to blind the eyes. All matters of moral science are matters as to which the best expression must very imperfectly represent what is in the mind of the man who thinks about them, if his thought is really valuable. Let us take advantage then of the absence of temptation to overstatement which is furnished by comparative absence of party feeling, and we shall have one difficulty the less. And my own notion is that in matters of real thought, where the question is how far what we

imagine or think has really hold of us, and how deep it lies within us, the more real our conviction and the more earnestly we wish to convey it to the minds of others, the more careful we shall be as to vehemence of the expression of it, lest it should be distorted and falsified. Men's minds are different: but to measure intensity of conviction by vehemence of language is the idlest of errors, and one which, if men want to see things for themselves, they must speedily get rid of.

Criticism on books of moral science is constantly some of the most really superficial criticism, on account of the imperfect effort made by the critic, in the manner which I have noticed, to understand what he is criticizing. I wish that, in the more quiet times of which I have spoken, the decline of general interest could be balanced by a greater conscientiousness in this respect. I criticize Mr Mill from a point of view of my own; but I have done my best, and that for the sake of my own mind, to penetrate to his. My view of the doubtfulness and difficulty of all these matters makes me only the more value such inward view as one may be able to get, however much or little one can communicate it. In each case where I have criticized, I have tried to give what seemed to me the right view instead of the wrong. And I have written in this way because I really think that, with a reader whose interest is in the subject and who wants to form his own opinion about it, the view of the thing as thus set before him is what is most likely to suggest to himself a train of thought which will result in a clear inward perception, whether it is the same as mine or whether it is different.

As I have had so much to controvert in Mr Mill, I must end this Introduction with an expression of

the obligation under which, in common I should think with all who take interest in mental or moral philosophy, I feel to him, for the manner in which he has upheld the credit of studies of this kind in what I suppose is to be considered an ungenial age. He has set an example of conscientious thought, and clear expression of what he means, which I hope I may be able to follow. I have been more diffuse than he is, a fault which, at least without more pains than I thought worth while or desirable, I could not avoid. If I have thereby lost in some respects, as in interest, I hope there may be some counterbalance.

CHAPTER I.

UTILITARIANISM, AS HELD BY MR MILL, COMPARED WITH PRECEDING FORMS OF IT.

In the paper which follows his Introduction Mr Mill describes what utilitarianism is, and meets various objections which have been made against it.

The objections are to a great extent, in his view, founded on misapprehension.

I will enumerate the objections[1]. They are

Objections to utilitarianism noticed by Mr Mill.

1. That it is hostile to whatever is pleasurable and ornamental[2].

2. (From the opposite direction) that it is an unworthy philosophy, taking account of little else except pleasure[2].

3. That it is a selfish philosophy, only teaching care for *our own* happiness[3].

4. (From the opposite direction again) that it is a chimerical philosophy, on account of the height of its standard, teaching regard for the general happiness in an impossible manner[4].

5. That it is an unfeeling philosophy, making people cold and unsympathizing. This objection is allied to the first[5].

6. That it is a godless philosophy[6].

7. That it is a philosophy of expediency, teaching the immediately and apparently useful instead

[1] See below, ch. xv. in which the same objections are considered at greater length.

[2] Mill's *Utilitarianism*, p. 8. [3] *Ib.* p. 24. [4] *Ib.* p. 25.

[5] *Ib.* p. 28. [6] *Ib.* p. 30.

of the permanently and really useful: and teaching mainly 'the useful to one's self.' This, as to the latter part of it, falls in with the third objection[1].

8. That it is a philosophy of calculation, requiring that which is both impossible and undesirable, viz. that when we have got to act, we should disregard feeling, and examine an infinite variety of possible consequences[2].

After this long string of counts in the indictment against utilitarianism, which I have given I think in Mr Mill's own order, follows a residuary count, alluding to various possible objections, and specifying one, namely, that on utilitarian principles we are very likely to make our particular case an exception to the rule we go on[3].

In reality he alters his system to escape them.

What utilitarianism *is*, in Mr Mill's view, appears in a double or, if we like, a treble form in this paper: that is, he describes in his own words, and without reference to the supposed objections, what, in principle, it is: but besides this, in meeting the objections, which he does with qualification, he gives us on the one hand a reassertion of old utilitarian doctrines; on the other, new (and professedly utilitarian) doctrines of his own. That he does this latter he to a certain extent avows, to that extent admitting the force of the objections made. The object of this first chapter of mine is to show that he really does it to a much greater extent than he avows, and that his *neo-utilitarianism*, as I have called it, is something very different from that to which the objections were made. In other chapters the reader will find a discussion of the principle of utilitarianism as Mr Mill gives it, independent of

[1] *Ib.* p. 31. [2] *Ib.* p. 33. [3] *Ib.* p. 36.

the objections, and an examination of the degree of truth which there is in that.

The first objection against utilitarianism Mr Mill considers to have arisen from a misunderstanding of the term. Of this I shall speak further on.

The second objection lies against utilitarianism in its character of descendant and representative of Epicureanism, which character Mr Mill carefully vindicates for it. He meets the objection, on behalf both of Epicureanism and its representative, by entirely changing his front, and introducing the notion of the distinction between quality and quantity of pleasure[1]. This, so far as it is any answer or has any reference to the objection, is an admission of its validity.

The third objection has again reference to utilitarianism as Epicureanism. This latter starts from the assumed fact that we tender our own happiness, and *recommends* us to tender that of others—on what ground? On the ground given being good, sufficient, and complete, depends immunity from this objection. The first Epicurean problem is to build philanthropy, the thing recommended, on the ground of self-regard, the thing understood. What Mr Mill does in reference to this objection is, to incorporate in the bad philosophy, by which utilitarianism, while vindicating to itself the apparent naturalness of Epicureanism, endeavours nevertheless to difference itself from Epicureanism, some new philosophy, not utilitarian, of his own, which is exceedingly good, and which in reality might have rendered the other unnecessary. As in the former case he added 'quality' to pleasure, so here he incorporates the whole doctrine of human sympathy and sociality[2].

[1] *Ib.* pp. 10—16 [2] *Ib.* pp. 25, 45.

The other objections will to some extent come under review as we proceed. I have dwelt here on these two, because it is chiefly in reference to them that I call attention in this chapter to the difference between Mr Mill's utilitarianism and that which preceded it.

There is one further objection which has lain against some of the forms of utilitarianism, and which has had a good deal to do (more probably than it ought) with determining the feeling about the whole. I mean the objection to it as something revolutionary, and loosening the grounds of morals. This is referred to by Mr Mill[1], but I have not enumerated it above.

Points in which Mr Mill's utilitarianism differs from the old utilitarianism.

By the 'old utilitarianism' as spoken of in this chapter I mean the philosophy, so far as it is one, of which we may take Paley and Bentham as joint representatives. I mention them, because the controversy which without doubt has suggested to Mr Mill most of the objections he speaks of, has generally had the form of criticism of their works. Such is the criticism of Sir James Mackintosh and Dr Whewell on Bentham, and of Professor Sedgwick and Dr Whewell on Paley.

I will first then call attention to a few points in which Mr Mill's view of utilitarianism differs from that which has been hitherto held: and next, to a few points in which it agrees with what has usually been considered as *not* being utilitarianism.

Mr Mill says with great truth[2]: 'Persons, even of considerable endowments, often give themselves so little trouble to understand the bearing of any doctrine against which they entertain a prejudice, and men are in general so little conscious of this voluntary ignorance as a defect, that the vulgarest mis-

[1] *Util.* p. 38. [2] *Ib.* p. 30.

understandings of ethical doctrines are constantly met with in the deliberate writings of persons of the greatest pretensions both to high principle and to philosophy.'

Utilitarians have sinned in this respect at least as much as they have been sinned against. There are other causes for the misrepresentation besides the contemptuous inattention which Mr Mill speaks of; such, for instance, as the fact that, moral discussion having been frequently carried on in a very *ad populum* manner, moralists themselves are not unfrequently in the habit, for the purpose of producing an effect, of stating their opinions in as startling a form as they can, at the hazard of overstating them: Mr Mill's present calmness of statement is unfortunately not the usual tone of moral discussion. To understand people's real or deliberate views is not therefore always very easy; and it is made more difficult by another fact, of which the present discussion seems to me an illustration. The vulgar get blamed for the unfixedness of language, but the wise are as much to blame for it as they. If the reader at the close of the present discussion will look back to the vagueness of the term *utilitarianism*, and the indefiniteness of its application, he will pardon its opponents for misunderstanding it.

No person living has a better claim than Mr Mill to be listened to when he censures the little pains that moralists take to understand one another, because no person exerts himself apparently more, or with better success, to make things clear than himself. But his censure I think is not quite in place in *this* paper: first because, as I trust we shall see, he is really answering objections made against utilitarianism in one view by understanding it in another: and next, because there is appearance that the change

of view is in some sense an actual result of the objection, and is therefore to that extent an admission of its validity. Thus Mr Mill refers to the manner in which the followers of Epicurus were in early times likened to swine, and to the fact that 'modern holders of the doctrine are occasionally made the subject of equally polite comparisons by its German, French, and English assailants[1].'

Now when those whom, it is to be supposed, Mr Mill here refers to have been thus treated, it has commonly been in reference to a doctrine which they have taken pains to put forth with very great distinctness, and which may be expressed thus:—that 'pleasures differ from each other in nothing but intensity and duration*.' A similar doctrine was a cardinal

1. He lays stress on the quality, as distinguished from the quantity, of pleasure.

[1] p. 10.

* 'In which inquiry (the inquiry what human happiness consists in) I will omit much usual declamation on the dignity and capacity of our nature; the superiority of the soul to the body, of the rational to the animal part of our constitution: upon the worthiness, refinement and delicacy, of some satisfactions, or the meanness, grossness and sensuality of others: because I hold that pleasures differ in nothing but in continuance and intensity: from a just computation of which, confirmed by what we observe of the apparent cheerfulness, tranquillity, and contentment, of men of different tastes, tempers, stations, and pursuits, every question concerning human happiness must receive its decision.' Paley, *Moral and Pol. Phil.* B. I. ch. 6. I am afraid Mr Mill's papers would have come, with the older utilitarians, under the head of 'declamation.' The 'computation' here spoken of by Paley is treated of more systematically by Bentham in ch. 4 of the '*Principles of Morals and Legislation*,' the title of which is, 'Value of a lot of pleasure and pain, how to be measured.' Bentham gives there the 'elements or dimensions of value' of a pleasure or pain, which he describes as six in number, 'its intensity, its duration, its certainty, its propinquity, its fecundity, its purity' (the latter term signifying its freedom from admixture of elements of an opposite character, as of pain with pleasure, and vice versâ). There is added for certain purposes another dimension, viz. 'extent.' These, then, are the elements of *value* of pleasures in Bentham's view, all of them readily lending themselves to calculation or estimation, and the essence of utilitarianism being, in his view, that they did so. Then, and not till then, *after* the consideration of the relative value of pleasures, comes the chapter 'On pleasures and pains, their kinds.' Bentham well understood that the recognition of *kind*, or *quality* of pleasure, as an element

point of Bentham's system: without it any attempt at analysis of pleasure such as he makes would be in the idea of it absurd. Mr Mill has no logical right to say on the one side that this charge is not valid against the system which he defends, and on the other to correct the system just in the particular point which the charge touches; yet this is what in fact he does when he makes the value of pleasures to depend on their *quality* as well as on their *quantity*. He appears to refer, in his censure, to language like that used by Dr Whewell of Paley*, at the same time that he in fact adopts the very correction which the language he censures suggests, admits that pleasures ought to be considered (in so far as we estimate them for the purpose of guiding action) as varying in kind as well as in intensity and duration, and proposes this *now* as a part of utilitarianism.

of value, would have entirely destroyed the use of his scheme of measurement or estimation. Kind or quality of pleasure, is, on the Benthamic or old utilitarian scheme, not at all ignored; rather, a great deal of notice is taken of it: but, in judging whether one or another pleasure is to be the motive of action, it is not, according to that scheme, the kind of pleasure which is to be taken account of, but the comparative value of the one and the other pleasure estimated in the elements or dimensions which Bentham has given. The kind or genus may be a guide to this, but must be subsidiary to it. One kind of pleasure may be, systematically, to be preferred to another, but it must be because the pleasures classified under it generally exceed those under the other in intensity, or some other of the elements of value. The estimation of pleasures by their kind or quality, independent of these elements of value, is, so far as I can understand, exactly what Bentham wanted to prevent. The unanalyzed comparative experience of people, which Mr Mill brings forward as the proper guide, is exactly the thing which Bentham distrusted and disliked, and against which his system of analysis and measurement of pleasures was mainly directed, in so far as we estimate them for the purpose of guiding action. The reader will observe that in the above enumeration it is only 'intensity' and 'duration' which can with much propriety be called 'dimensions,' the other elements being of a more circumstantial character.

* See p. xl. of Dr Whewell's Preface to Mackintosh's *Dissertation on Ethical Philosophy* (3rd Edit.).

This therefore is one point in which Mr Mill's utilitarianism differs from that which has preceded him, and against which the objections which he notices have been directed.

Two other such points are the following:—Mr Mill speaks[1] of the existence, as to morality, of 'a basis of powerful natural sentiment' in language which would surely have been quite disclaimed by those utilitarians whose cause he professes to defend, and which might indeed be borrowed from that doctrine, hostile to utilitarianism, to which he has given the name of 'intuitivism[2].' 'The deeply rooted conception which each individual even now has of himself as a social being, tends to make him feel it one of his natural wants that there should be harmony between his feelings and aims and those of his fellow-creatures . . . . This feeling in most individuals is much inferior in strength to their selfish feelings, and is often wanting altogether. But to those who have it, it possesses all the characters of a natural feeling. It does not present itself to their minds as a superstition of education, or a law despotically imposed by the power of society, but as an attribute which it would not be well for them to be without. This conviction is the ultimate sanction of the greatest happiness morality[3].' Nothing can be more opposite to this than the language of Paley and Bentham. Paley's view, as to the existence of such feelings as Mr Mill here describes, is, 'either that there exist no such instincts as compose what is called the moral sense, or that they are not now to be distinguished from prejudices and habits*;' and as to their being 'the ultimate sanction of morality,' 'that we can be

2. He makes social feeling the ultimate sanction of morality.

[1] p. 45. [2] pp. 3, 4. [3] p. 49.

* *Mor. and Pol. Ph.* B. I. ch. 5.

obliged to nothing but what we are to gain or lose something by*.' Bentham enumerates four sanctions of the 'greatest happiness morality;' and though he afterwards, it appears, discovered some more, this of Mr Mill's was not one; they are, the moral or popular sanction (nearly equivalent to the force of public opinion), the physical, the political, and the religious sanctions†. Bentham duly notices, amongst other feelings and motives, those of sympathy and good will‡: but to call them 'the ultimate sanction of morality' seems to me just what he meant to condemn when he placed among principles adverse to that of utility 'the principle of sympathy and antipathy, which approves and disapproves merely because a man feels himself disposed to do so, and holds up that approbation as a sufficient reason for action in itself§.'

3. He allows weight to traditional morality.

Again, the suspicion entertained some time since against what was called utilitarianism had its origin in the claim on the part of some forms of that utilitarianism, to regenerate morality by the introduction of a principle new or hitherto much neglected. Bentham, whom for his earnest philanthropy moralists of all schools have reason to honour, offered himself, not consciously but really, as a sort of ethical Bacon. Mr Mill's language is very different[1]. 'During all that time' (the whole past duration of the human race) 'mankind have been learning by experience the tendencies of actions.....On any hypothesis short of universal idiocy, mankind must by this time have acquired positive beliefs as to the effects of some actions on their happiness: and the beliefs which have

* *Mor. and Pol. Ph.* B. II. ch. 2.
† *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ch. 3.
‡ *Ib.* ch. 10. § *Ib.* ch. 2.
[1] p. 33.

thus come down are the rules of morality for the multitude, and for the philosopher, until he has succeeded in finding something better. That philosophers might easily do this, even now, on many subjects: that the received code of ethics is by no means of divine right: and that mankind have still much to learn as to the effects of actions on the general happiness, I admit, or rather, earnestly maintain.'

The utilitarian view which made people suspicious was that mankind had *almost everything* to learn in this respect, and that as a 'temporis partus maximus' there was born a philosophy which would immediately teach what had been till then unknown. So far as we allow, in testimony of what is useful and good, the past experience and practice of mankind, we make a morality which, whatever its merits, is historical rather than distinctively rational, a morality which it was the main purpose of Bentham's life to cause people to distrust. If utilitarianism has not taught us something new about these moral rules derived from tradition and experience, and made us look on them differently from what we did before, what has it done, and why has it given itself a special name? Does the term 'utilitarian' denote something which people have always been, or something which some have lately begun to be? The Benthamic utilitarianism seems simple, as requiring that people should be prepared, in regard of any action which they recommend as moral (to themselves or others), to give a distinct reason for it by showing that the pleasures likely to result from it are greater than the pains, putting into account on the side of pleasure (if the case is one to allow of it) any addition which may be made to human pleasure by the existence of a general and untransgressed rule on the subject. This Benthamic utilitarianism, on the face

of it, and previous to practice, is quite distinct: it is looked on with favour by some for the very reason for which it is looked on with disfavour by others, namely, because it seems so business-like: 'laudatur ab his, culpatur ab illis.' If it is to resolve itself into nothing more than that we are to consider that 'the received code of ethics is not of divine right,' that in fact we are not to let our moral judgment sleep in reliance on custom and tradition, but to keep it always vigorous and awake, it certainly deserves no blame; but I scarcely see what there was, or is, in it to support, or who will oppose it.

Mr Mill's approximation to non-utilitarians.

So much for Mr Mill's want of resemblance to the utilitarians whom he takes under his defence: his resemblance to those who are not utilitarians, or at least would not generally be called so, has perhaps already suggested itself to the reader; and therefore less need be said upon it.

Though Mr Mill appears, as we have already seen, to identify his cause with that of the Epicureans, he yet, in one most important feature of that complicated school, sympathizes with the Stoics. The cardinal doctrine of man's sociality being a fundamental ingredient of his nature, which, though involved more or less in all moral systems, was yet perhaps brought out (theoretically) the least by the Epicurean theory, and by the Stoic the most, finds in him a most eloquent expounder. Neither Cicero, nor Grotius, nor any of the moralists whom utilitarianism, as it has hitherto been understood, would most despise, could express the basis of morality better in this view than Mr Mill has done in the beautiful passage, too long to quote, which occurs in page 45, beginning, 'The social state is at once so natural, so necessary, and so habitual to man, that, except in some unusual circumstances, he never conceives himself otherwise than as

a member of a body,' and going on then to show how men come to 'propose to themselves a collective, not an individual, interest as the aim of their actions.' Whatever polemical value Mr Mill's papers may have, they contain passages of permanent moral value to people of *all* schools, which his supposed opponents might accept as conveying their sentiments better perhaps than they could do themselves.

There is no reason however to dwell longer on Mr Mill's difference from the older utilitarians and his approximation to non-utilitarians, more especially since other features of these will perhaps appear in what follows. Mr Mill's papers are for the double purpose of exhibiting utilitarianism as he understands it, and of answering objections which have been made against it. To show therefore that Mr Mill's utilitarianism is not the form of utilitarianism against which in general the objections have been made, is important in reference to the subject. Mr Mill has a better right than any one to say what the word 'utilitarianism' shall be taken to apply to, since it appears he was the first to give it its philosophical application. If it is to mean what he would now have it mean, much of the old charge against it disappears. But if he allows the meaning of the term as it was understood both by friends and enemies when the charges he censures were made against it, then what he now proposes must be considered a kind of neo-utilitarianism which may be in some measure sympathized with and accepted even by those who think that the old charges were deserved.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT DOES HAPPINESS CONSIST IN?

Is there such a thing as happiness? Is it attainable, and is it describable, so as to lend itself to be an object of action, such as utilitarianism would make it? And what is the bearing of these questions on the question whether utilitarianism is or is not the right moral philosophy?

These are the general questions which are partially touched on, so far as Mr Mill's papers suggest them, in this chapter.

Utilitarians commonly hold that happiness is easily describable and attainable.

The utilitarian stands firm on the ground of positivism, of *what is,* so far as that will carry him. Happiness, whether we mean by it welfare or pleasure, is a real thing, which we do desire for ourselves, and more or less for others also: it is to a certain extent attainable, and to a certain extent describable. To how great an extent?

In reality this question does not belong to utilitarianism more than to any other philosophy. The important question about a system of philosophy is not whether it is (apparently) easy and simple, but whether it is true. Happiness might be an exceedingly difficult thing both to describe and to attain, and yet utilitarianism be true, if in other ways we were led to consider so. Human nature and life are

large things, and I do not see why we should really presume beforehand that moral philosophy would be easy. But utilitarians have been much in the habit of recommending their philosophy on the ground of its easiness. Hence the common effort on their part to show that happiness is easily describable, and easily attainable.

Taking Bentham and Paley as representatives of the old utilitarianism, the former had the mind of a legislator, the latter of a man of prudential good sense. The former looked at the manner in which happiness could be best provided for by institutions, the latter showed how life could be best lived with a view to it.

In view of legislation, what is to be considered 'the desirable' or happiness must be to some extent agreed upon and described, and Bentham did good service by his attempt to do this systematically. And prudential rules for the conduct of life, such as Paley has given, and Mr Mill in these papers, are the oldest part of moral philosophy.

Against utilitarianism it has been argued, that it cannot furnish a proper rule of human conduct on account of the imperfect manner in which, after all, happiness can be understood and described. This argument does not disprove utilitarianism, for it is open to the utilitarian to say that no *more* proper rule is furnished by any other philosophy, and that it is not his business to show that a rule proper to the degree which the argument supposes, exists at all: but it meets any claims which the utilitarian may make, not on the ground of his rule being the right, or the only, or the best, rule, but on the ground of its being a satisfactory one. And the argument is valid, from various considerations about happiness, such as the following.

This view is true only within a limited and unimportant field.

1. Happiness is very different for different people.

2. We as yet, at least, know very little how far a man, by the power of his own will and imagination on his thoughts and feelings, can make his own happiness under any circumstances.

3. Nor how far, under any circumstances again, his constitution and temper may have settled the question of happiness or unhappiness for him.

4. We have no means of deciding whether we shall best spend our efforts in trying to be happy under existing circumstances, or in trying to improve the circumstances:

5. Nor of deciding, if there are different qualities or heights of happiness, whether we had best rest in the lower quality or strive to attain to the higher.

I might go on with many more difficulties like these, and I have called utilitarianism, in what follows, superficial, because instead of facing the real questions, it rests so much on mere prudentialisms. Of the above, the first difficulty is the most salient; and is so great, that it furnishes a ready retort against the utilitarian who urges against other moral theories, as, for instance, those which dwell much on duty, the uncertainty of the rules which they give. There are wants of our animal nature the satisfaction of which is happiness in the view of the economist: but human life developes wants and feelings much beyond all this, and *here* it is as hard to find universally accepted pleasures as it is to find universally accepted notions of duty.

It is a commonplace that happiness is not the same thing for every one in such a sense that it can be, in any detail, particularized and described. Utilitarians have the voice of mankind and of literature

with them when they say that all action is, naturally, aimed at happiness, but *against* them when they go on from this to say that we may lay down on paper what happiness is, and so have an easy or ready way of directing our action, and that in the best manner.

It is at variance with a consistent positivism.

A positivism thoroughly carried out would recognize in the utilitarian notion of happiness one of the unreal ideas, whether metaphysical, imaginative, or of whatever kind, which are to be discarded. Such an extreme positivism brings us in many respects to the same point to which a thorough idealism would. Utilitarianism and other partial moral systems present to us a partial view of life, and say, Live according to an ideal of life, but one which goes *thus* far only. The positivism which I have spoken of would say, Live, taking life itself in all its fulness as your guide, and beware that you do not let the singleness and simplicity of your view be altered by an ideal, which after all is not life itself, but only something of your own construction. Such thorough positivism quarrels with idealism more on the ground of the necessary imperfection and incompleteness of it than on any other. It says, There can be no true and complete ideal of life but such as we unconsciously form in *living*. As against partial idealisms, this is thoroughly true. And as against idealism of any kind, in so far as this is necessarily in some degree partial, it is worthy to be borne in mind.

Mr Mill's statement of the utilitarian theory.

The two passages in which Mr Mill seems to state most distinctly the utilitarian theory without reference to objections are in pp. 9, 10, 17. 'The creed,' it is said in the former of these passages, 'which accepts as the foundation of morals, utility, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to produce happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure,

and the absence of pain: by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure.'

The utilitarian theory of life is, 'that pleasure and freedom from pain are the only things desirable as ends: and that all desirable things (which are as numerous in the utilitarian as in any other scheme) are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain.'

The utilitarian τέλος, or the ultimate end of life, is described by Mr Mill in the second passage which I have referred to: calling it roughly happiness, it gives, in Mr Mill's view, the standard of morality; which (standard) 'may accordingly be defined, the rules and precepts for human conduct, by the observance of which an existence such as has been described might be, to the greatest extent possible, secured to all mankind; and not to them only, but, so far as the nature of things admits, to the whole sentient creation.'

All systems of morality take account of the end of actions, and may so far be considered utilitarian.

Now from the beginning of moral philosophy to the present day, whenever the question of an action being right or wrong has been considered as depending upon the end to which it conduced, that end has been of necessity such as might be described as some kind of happiness of somebody. Nothing is acted for except as in some way desirable. And since the very notion of reasonable action is that it is for a purpose, no system of morality could entirely neglect to take account of the purpose or end of actions. And so far as it does this, it determines morality by the consideration of conduciveness to happiness: or is so far what Mr Mill would call utilitarian.

It is evident however that we are advanced but a little way towards answering the questions of morality when we have got only to this: and there are

some particulars of the complicated feelings of mankind in relation to morality, which this consideration of the conduciveness of actions to an end does not seem likely to be able to account for.

The specific differences of Mr Mill's utilitarianism as above described, among other systems which refer action to an end, seem to be that by happiness he would understand pleasure and absence of pain, describing the circumstances of these with reference to actual human life: and again, that he would make this conduciveness to an end (namely, pleasure as thus understood) the *sole* test of rightness.

The specific differences of utilitarianism, as described by Mr Mill, are that it identifies happiness with pleasure, and makes conduciveness to pleasure the sole test of rightness.

If we are to suppose happiness and pleasure to be different *notions*, so that the saying that happiness consists in pleasure is any explanation of the former, we must mean by pleasure not merely well-being, or any indefinite idea of that kind, but something of which we have distinct consciousness and experience. And so Mr Mill, in clear and in fact beautiful language, explains he does mean. It is here that there comes in the difference between Mr Mill's utilitarianism and other moral systems which may attribute no less importance to the conduciveness of actions to happiness. Let Mr Mill, if he will, make the great scheme of morality utilitarian, in this sense, that he supposes the happiness of whatever can feel happiness to be the proper object of all the action which can go on in the universe[1]; and as we know that the action of God is directed to this purpose, let us consider that the rightness or valuableness of human action is only another word for the conformity of *it* also to this same purpose. But the knowledge how we are to act in the complicated relations of human life cannot be gained by a summary transference of this leading idea to another region of thought, and understanding

[1] *Util.* p. 31.

by happiness simply recognized or experienced pleasure: even supposing we were certain that no accompanying ideas, besides that of the universal end to be attained, were needed.

Happiness a worthy but a subordinate subject for study.

I hope I may be able to avoid, in controverting Mr Mill, any disposition to value less than he does human happiness, or even human pleasure, and the action which is conducive to it. I recognize fully the worth, not only of *his* utilitarianism, but of the older and inferior, as aiding the study, than which nothing can be more important, of the manner in which human happiness may be promoted. I do not very much believe in *a science* of human happiness, for reasons which we may perhaps see presently; but we all might be made much wiser in regard to ourselves, and much less helpless and more serviceable in respect of others, by intelligent thought as to what happiness is: and if utilitarianism furnishes us with this, we may afford to pardon it some theoretical error. But it appears to me that the attempt of utilitarianism, as it shows itself in these papers, to make itself at once into the whole of morality, and to proclaim that, as to action, there is nothing worthy of human thought but happiness, will hinder rather and injure the good work which in a restricted sphere it might do, namely, making us better understand what man's happiness really is.

The chief objection to the utilitarian theory arises from the difficulty of determining what happiness consists in, and of comparing the

The difficulty of utilitarianism in regard of its claims exclusively to determine action, arises not so much from the supposition of the *unattainableness* of happiness, which is what Mr Mill in the main sets himself to controvert (for few would doubt but that, whether attainable or not, it is a thing worth striving after), as from the difficulty of determining, after we have passed the narrow limits of food and raiment, of health, peace, and competence, what, for

different people, it consists in, and of comparing the supposed happiness of one person with that of another. The question is not, Have we a clear enough view of what it is, to stimulate our own action so far as we want such stimulus, and to guide our benevolence; but, Have we a clear enough view of it to be able to balance and calculate the different ingredients of it, the different pleasures, as Bentham did, or in any similar way, so that our reason may be able to determine the desirableness of actions in *this* way to the exclusion of all others?

happiness of one person with that of another.

Perhaps we shall be able to form a presumption as to the probability of mankind being agreed in regard of the happiness to be aimed at, by seeing how far we agree with Mr Mill's own view of happiness as expressed in these papers. One passage in which he describes it is the following: 'The happiness which they' (some philosophers) 'meant was not a life of rapture, but moments of such, in an existence made up of few and transitory pains, many and various pleasures, with a decided predominance of the active over the passive, and having as the foundation of the whole, not to expect more from life than it is capable of bestowing. A life thus composed...has always appeared worthy of the name of happiness[1].'

Illustration from Mr Mill's own description of happiness, one point of which is that 'we are not to expect too much from life:'

Let us take any feature of this picture, as for instance the last: 'not to expect more from life than it is capable of bestowing.' (How, by the way, are we to know how much it is capable of bestowing?) This is supposedly a point of happiness. I will not say it is not, but I am not very clear about it, if we are to look at life as we really think and talk about it, and not in that rather conventional way which we may perhaps call the moralistic*, and which is

a maxim true only as corrective of counter-exaggeration;

[1] *Ut.* p. 18.

* Perhaps the best way in which I can obviate misapprehension as to

used for exemplar stories and for advice to others, in which strong elements are evaporated, and strong features toned down. I can hardly think Nature

what I mean by this term, is to mention what a view of happiness like that given in Paley suggests to me. It is very valuable and useful, on the supposition that we understand it simply as a corrective, and are sure (as we may be sure) that it will not be attended to more than in a certain, and that a limited, degree. Just as the advice of parents to their children is given with the feeling, on the part of the parent, that there is sure to be enough in the child of strong passion, hopefulness, enterprize, and other elements of this kind, which he only fears lest there should be too much of, but the absence of which, though they make no part of his advice, he understands would be quite as great a calamity as disregard of his advice. Mr Mill's prescription for happiness, not to expect too much from life, is of this character. Considering the exceeding likelihood that we shall form utterly unreasonable expectations, the advice, in this point of view, is most sensible. But if Mr Mill's view were, not simply to correct and restrain a temper of mind which he knows is sure to exist in spite of all that may be said against it, but to describe the temper which he thinks should be, I would take, for happiness, what seems to me to be the side of nature against him. And so as to Paley: if his description of what will make us happy is intended as a portrait of a happy life, without the supposition of there existing besides a mass of strong emotion, impulse, imagination, and other such elements, of which what he gives is really only a chastening or correction, I must say that in my view, setting aside (as he too must set aside) casualty and misfortune, human life as it exists is not only better but happier than he would make it.

If we *are* to think of a happiness greater and better than nature provides for us already, the soberer elements of it correcting, but not supplanting the more energetic, let us take a better and worthier ideal than that of Paley; an ideal really worth striving after. Of this the reader will find more in the sequel.

By the 'moralistic' view of life, in a sense slightly depreciatory, I mean such a view of it as is taken by Juvenal in the tenth Satire, and by Johnson in his imitation of it, "The Vanity of Human Wishes." When that which is very well as simple correction is carried out into a real criticism of human life with its enterprize and its action, I can only say that the philosophic view seems to me both less true, and lower, than the vulgar.

Johnson's view as to what we should expect from life may appear from such lines as

> Condemn'd to hope's delusive mine
> As on we toil from day to day,

and similar ones. Johnson was the opposite of a superficial and commonplace man, and was led to views of this kind partly by his century, and partly by his temperament.

was wrong in filling us, as she does, especially in earlier days, with hope and unlimited expectation, even though perhaps much of bitter disappointment should follow. At least we cannot accept it as a general fact of human nature that this absence of hopefulness, this want of sanguineness, is a feature of happiness: and the same I think of the other features assigned by Mr Mill, as for instance variety of pleasures: can we hope then for much general agreement in the future?

and inconsistent with the distinction previously drawn between happiness and contentment.

So far as the maxim that we should not expect too much from life, goes in company with the religious idea of another life to which we may transfer our expectations, it is well; but so far as it stands independent of this, both it and the theory of life to which it belongs are surely questionable. Mr Mill has wisely pointed out the difference between happiness and content, but he scarcely seems, in his own view of life, sufficiently to bear it in mind. After saying 'It is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied[1],' it is not consistent to write, as he does in a subsequent page, as if a happy life and a satisfied one were the same*. The fact is, that Mr Mill's notion of the difference in *quality* between one sort of happiness and another is difficult to reconcile, not only with the utilitarian theory to which he applies it, but with any idea of happiness being at all readily attainable and consisting, to any important degree, in satisfaction. Are we, or are we not, to try to make our happiness and pleasures of the highest quality of which our nature is capable? And if we admit this idea of *highest* quality, have we not got, not only an idea not belonging to utilitarianism, but also a very disturbing idea? Is life to be an

[1] *Util.* p. 14.

* *Ib.* p. 19. 'The main constituents of a satisfied life appear to be two,' &c.

effort after the higher happiness, or a satisfaction in the nearer and lower; a well-adjusted balancing, as Mr Mill describes it, of tranquillity and excitement?

In reality, Mr Mill upon his utilitarian principles, in spite of his saying that happiness is not contentment, or the merely being satisfied, is obliged to come to what amounts to saying that it *is*, having no choice except to do this or to put it in the other Epicurean idea of indulgence. It is thus that utilitarianism, by making a general theory of human life and human happiness of too *immediate* importance to morals, is likely *not* to be of use in furthering our knowledge what that serious and complicated thing, human life, is. Utilitarians *must have* general rules of human happiness for their system, and they can hardly help assuming as such what are at best most imperfectly made out to be so, rules, for instance, which would make happiness for one person, but not for another. Mr Mill's remarks upon human happiness in the papers before us are full of interest, and full of true feeling and happy expression, as regards the particular points touched, but I think it will be considered, on examination, that the theory they involve is superficial. It is very well, as practical advice, to tell us that happiness consists in mental cultivation, in working so much and allowing ourselves just so much excitement as will render rest pleasant, and resting no longer than till we get an appetite for excitement again[1]: but the springs of human happiness and unhappiness lie deeper than all this, and Mr Mill goes surely nearer to touching them in his incidental remarks which have no dependence on utilitarianism, (such as those on egotism[2]) than he does in his theory.

[1] *Ib.* p. 19, 20. [2] *Ib.* p. 20.

I do not think that moral philosophy can be of the use of which it should be, unless it struggles, at least, to cope with the greatness and complexity of the problem which there is before it, and to face the difficulty of the variableness and vastness of the nature of man. Whether it ever can do much in this way, I do not say: but at least the most important thing it can do is to try. With all its failings hitherto, whatever they may have been, of laying its foundations here and there in different places, so as to make everything perhaps doubtful in it and much necessarily wrong, there is one failing at least as great as any, namely the way in which, led by its various hypotheses, it has taken views of human nature manifestly partial and incomplete even to the eyes of those who are no philosophers, if only they think a moment. When people feel, as they must, the variety of thought and feeling even in their own minds, multiplied infinitely in the society of men around them, they must wonder, one would think, what moral philosophy can be for, when they read its hasty hypotheses and summary generalizations; as, that they really do everything by deliberate selfishness, that all ideas of honour are something fantastic and absurd, or whatever else it may be. The moral philosopher must to some extent make *himself* the measure of human nature: the more real-minded he is, and the less he is the mere echo of others, the more is there danger of his failing to take account of moral facts as to human nature, which his own disposition does not lead him to enter into: and when to the promptings of individuality there are added the exigencies of theory, portraits of human nature (for such every moral philosophy must be) arise, which are most unsatisfactory and incomplete.

Danger to which moral philosophy (and utilitarianism in particular) is liable, of taking hasty and partial views of human nature.

Utilitarianism I think does not help at all that

most important object, in regard of moral philosophy, the widening its range and view. Obliged by its principles to assume a definiteness or describability as to happiness, which, in my notion, does not exist, utilitarianism can hardly help being hasty and premature in fixing what happiness is, and calling that happiness, which, if we are to have the idea, really seems not worthy of the name. I only, in this respect, demur to the *claims* of utilitarianism when compared with what it *does:* I welcome what it does, but cannot think that it is *much*, that it is much better than what *has* been done by other systems before it, or that it promises much in the future.

The utilitarian axiom, if it is to be of any signifi-

To return to Mr Mill's description of happiness: the same thing, it seems to me, is to be said of this, which is to be said of that of Paley* and perhaps of

* Paley, B. I. ch. 6, describes happiness as *not* consisting in (1) self-indulgence, (2) idleness, (3) greatness; and *as* consisting in (1) sociality, (2) occupation, (3) what we may call moderation, (4) health. If his account had been given in perfect good faith, I do not see why he should not have added competent livelihood or fortune, for that is not more a matter out of our own power than health is, and in the importance of it for happiness Aristotle and an English tradesman would alike agree. But Paley wished to establish that happiness is pretty equally distributed amongst the different orders of civil society. The fact is, that happiness is distributed among *all*, rich and poor, sick and healthful, old and young, in a manner very ill represented by the above superficial statement, and according to complicated laws which such generalities only tend to obscure.

Paley's account of happiness is very interesting, but more so, I think, as showing his own mind than in any other view. That it does so, that it is thus *first-hand*, is a great merit. But the moralist, in describing happiness, *must be* in a difficulty. If he takes the picture from his own feeling and experience, it must be most incomplete. If he takes it from his thought, intercourse with others, and general judgment, it is very likely to be most vague and mistaken.

Paley's third character of happiness, which I have called 'moderation,' is in reality 'the prudent constitution of the habits.' Like much of Paley, it is so practical as to be in fact unpractical. 'Set the habits in such a manner that every change may be a change for the better.' To use the illustration which Paley himself gives: Inure yourself to books of science and argumentation, because then any other book which may fall in your way will be a change for the better: they (the books

many others: namely, that as views of life, practical and interesting so far as they go, no fault is to be found with them: but that in the character of descriptions of happiness such as must be required to make significant and effective the utilitarian axiom, that actions are right as they promote happiness and wrong as they do the reverse, they are altogether insufficient and incomplete. Utilitarianism requires us not only to admit its axiom, but to confess that it is the single moral maxim that is of value, and that any others, as that actions are right so far as they are kind, so far as they are fair or just, or whatever it may

cance, requires a more exact description of happiness than is given by utilitarian writers.

of science) will give you an appetite for novels, well-written pamphlets, and articles of news, and you will sit down to these latter with relish, till the habitual feeling acts again to send you to your graver reading. It seems to me odd that Paley should have taken this merely business view of the science and argumentation of which he was such a master: but what is of more consequence, I think it shows how the looking at things only in the point of view of happiness and pleasure obscures our notion of their relative importance: and I think what Paley here says of books belongs to his whole view of life. He thinks of life as an alternation of work and play, much in the way that a schoolboy thinks of *his* life, with the same absence of notion of the work being for any purpose, except that it must be, and with the same notion that it is the play or enjoyment which is the real life. But even the schoolboy would hardly understand being told to go into school only in order that he might enjoy his play the more, and the telling us, deliberately, to set our habits so that changes in them may be for the better, seems to me the same kind of advice.

What is wanted is the thought of life as directed upon other views than this conscious thought of the happiness of it: either simply natural views, such as that we have our bread to get, our family to support, our position to secure or improve, our plans and enterprizes to carry out, the interests of our neighbourhood or our country, or of science, or of the human race, to further as we may; and happiness to us will then mean the degree in which we are able to succeed in these things, and to bear want of success with patience: or more ideal views, in which it will be rather the worthier of these purposes which suggest themselves to us, and other purposes as well, such as the improvement of our own and others' character, the higher interests of the human race, the glory of God. Here too, it is in *living*, that we shall find, if we find, our happiness.

The same unpracticalness arising from an attempt at being over-practical belongs to what Paley says as to occupation, or 'the exercise of our faculties to some engaging end.'

be, are only derivative from this. We ask for a description of the happiness. Sometimes utilitarianism, as in Bentham, may make the attempt to methodize and systematize pleasures in a sort of scientific manner: but I apprehend that the more practical and thoughtful of the school, as perhaps Mr Mill, do not like this. They *then* have to give us, as happiness, either what their own individual disposition prompts, or else a repetition, more or less, of that rude and manifestly incomplete human *practical* observation about happiness which has always existed, but which, merely repeated, is little more than common-place. True, fresh, and original observations as to human life and happiness *may* be made by utilitarians as by others: but there is nothing I think in their system to lead them specially to make it.

Further consideration of Mr Mill's description of happiness as involving:

The three most noticeable features of Mr Mill's description of happiness are perhaps, first that he goes far, as we have seen, to resolve happiness into contentment, and changes his term from a 'happy life' into a 'satisfied' one[1]: then that he considers a very great element of happiness to be wideness of interest and intellectual cultivation*: and last that he disagrees with the often repeated couplet which tells us that the portion of human woe which kings and laws can cure is very small, and thinks that better laws would cure a very great deal of it[2].

1. Contentment.

The first of these is something which I wonder at seeing brought into so much prominence by a political economist like Mr Mill, since in that science aspiration after improvement of economical condition appears as the principle of all progress, and

[1] p. 19. [2] p. 21.

* The necessity, for happiness, of social and loving emotion, which Mr Mill puts forward very prominently, should perhaps be added as a separate feature.

contentment with a low condition the thing most to be dreaded. Nor is the praise of contentment, one would think, very utilitarian in *principle*, for contentment depends upon the mind as well as the condition. And if we think much of what the mind of itself can do in this respect, we drift away from the idea of assignable happiness being the only good thing, and come towards the idea which Mr Mill does not like, of its being possible, if we may say so, to be something as good as happy without apparent means of happiness. As a commonplace, the praise of contentment has the sort of truth which such things have; a truth, that is, partial, and admitting the opposite to be said with equal truth. When Mr Mill says, for instance, as we have seen, that it is a great thing for happiness to expect little from life, I apprehend that with at least an equal degree of truth we might say, that it was a great thing for happiness to expect a great deal from it. But really, whether we do well to be satisfied depends (and in this Mr Mill will agree with me) on what it is we are satisfied with. To be satisfied with what ought not to satisfy us is as great a misfortune as to be dissatisfied and restless when there is no reason for being so: *i. e.* we come away from happiness into the region of 'ought,' the right, the fitting. *Right* dissatisfaction is the spring of all human progress and improvement.

2. Mental cultivation.

About the value for happiness of mental cultivation and wide-spreading intellectual interest I will not speak. Mr Mill corrects what there might be of superficiality in the notion as he first gives it, and as is involved, to my view, in the word *cultivation*, by saying, at the conclusion of the passage, that it is not for the gratification of curiosity only that these things should be regarded, but that 'a

moral and a human interest' should be taken in them. And no one can doubt but that in the mind thus exercised is to be found one of the best and most real sources of happiness*:

3. Improved laws.

Nor will I say anything, at least just now, about the manner in which Mr Mill thinks we ought all to be happy now, if it were not for 'bad laws and subjection to the will of others[1].' I wish laws were better, and whatever I may think myself, I rejoice to see others full of faith in the improvability of them, and would not say a word to produce hopelessness or wrong satisfaction with what is not good. Mr Mill's language is not indeed altogether encouraging: he anticipates this world becoming some day, 'all that, if will and knowledge were not wanting, it might easily be made[2].' If will and knowledge both are wanting, if we neither care for the thing nor know anything about it, no wonder the task is not easy, but it may be possible.

Mr Mill goes on to say, after describing the kind of life which is worthy of the name of happiness, that 'such an existence is even now the lot of many during some considerable portion of their lives. The present wretched education, and wretched social arrangements, are the only real hindrance to its being attainable by almost all[3].'

Then, showing more in detail how this may be, he says that 'most of the great positive evils of the world' (of which he takes as examples poverty,

[1] p. 21. [2] p. 22. [3] p. 19.

* 'Nam sive oblectatio quæritur animi, requiesque curarum: quæ conferri cum eorum studiis potest, qui semper aliquid anquirunt, quod spectet et valeat ad bene beateque vivendum?' Cic. *de Off.* 2. 2. Cicero here gives us at once an ingredient of happiness, and the proper place of happiness itself in the investigations which he speaks of. It is to be hoped that the noble and liberal tone of mind which he speaks of is more abundant in our time and country than on the surface it would appear to be.

disease, and vicissitudes of fortune,) 'are in a great degree, many of them almost entirely, conquerable by human care and effort.'

Question as to Mr Mill's view of improved social arrangements; *e.g.* in regard to poverty.

Now here of course the question, What *are* better social arrangements, is as difficult as the question, What *is* happiness. And while heartily agreeing with Mr Mill in his hopefulness for the future, and only wishing to be able to agree with him still more, I am compelled to feel that the question is one which must very speedily arise, and which even the few and general words which he has said suggest. For instance, in regard of poverty we read, 'Poverty, in any sense implying suffering, may be completely extinguished by the wisdom of society, combined with the good sense and providence of individuals.' I do not think I am doing injustice to Mr Mill in considering that these words point at that cutting of the knot which many political economists recommend in the case of the difficulty of poverty, the taking care that numbers shall not be too great. This proposed remedy, coming from those who value as highly as Mr Mill does human happiness, of which the first and great element is surely life and existence itself, has always surprised me. It is indeed a ready remedy for poverty, but how, if it is to go to such an extent as to change the character of human society, it is to escape being a selfishness *en grand* of the human race (increasing individual enjoyment only by diminishing the number of enjoyers) I do not see. Not however to discuss this: in the same way as some of Mr Mill's prospective social arrangements seem questionable, some of his views of the present seem superficial; as where he says, 'As for vicissitudes of fortune, and other disappointments connected with worldly circumstances, these are principally the effect either of gross imprudence, or of

Superficial view of 'vicissitudes of life.'

ill-regulated desires, or of bad and imperfect social institutions.'

Is this so? and is our hope of amendment for the future to depend on our forming as to the present such views as this?

This observation of Mr Mill's suggests to me to close the chapter with saying that in writing about human happiness, while we must get rid of superstition, I do not think we can get rid, or ought to do so, of a feeling something like awe. The word itself, so far as its history is concerned, implies in almost every language something *not* in our own power. It is both unfeeling and unreal to talk of it as being so, except so far as we recognize an inward force, which may be supplemented by religious feeling, rising above adverse circumstances. The contemplation with a steady eye of the possible vicissitudes of life, in the midst of which our course is to be steered towards such happiness as may be possible for us, is something very different from Mr Mill's view of vicissitudes here. And for myself, there is something more terrible in the idea of such fearful alternations as these 'vicissitudes' represent being in our own power and resting upon us, considering our ignorance, than there is in the supposition of their being out of our power, so long as we may hope and trust the universe is not for evil.

CHAPTER III.

ON QUALITY OF PLEASURE.

I ALLUDED in the last chapter to the two great unsettled questions, to what degree happiness is different for different people, and how far it is in each man's own power for himself. Both these questions concern the subject of this chapter. If happiness is different for different people, how far *ought* it to be so? And how far can we raise the character of our happiness?

A morality of happiness, especially if it includes the idea of worthiness, is more acceptable than a morality of rule.

There is perhaps a disposition in our age to accept a morality of happiness as better, more like what we expect morality to be, than one of rule: such a morality may take the form of a utilitarianism recognizing different kinds of pleasures, some worthier and more to be striven after than others. Religion too has not unfrequently shown itself more in harmony with the moral philosophy which speaks much of happiness than with that which speaks much of law. And though it is true that when religion has spoken the language of bare utilitarianism, as in Paley, it has not much commended itself to real human feeling: still when it is presented to us not only as *conformable* to our desire, but also as what is to *regulate* our desire, uniting with its promises to make us happy a call upon us for effort after a worthy happiness, and elevation of our idea of happiness (as we are told on the one hand that the ways of religion are pleasantness and her paths peace, while on the other hand we

pray that we may love that which God commands and desire that he promises); the morality which is thus proposed to us has charms in our view which do not belong to a morality of rule.

But this idea of worthiness is inconsistent with positivist utilitarianism.

But then it is to be observed that this more attractive form of utilitarianism involves another idea besides that of pleasure or happiness, namely, *worthiness* as to pleasure or happiness, independent of quantity of it. However we acquire this idea of 'worthiness' in pleasure, it is certainly not acquired from the mere consideration of the pleasure; the feeling we have of it is not simply that of being pleased or of enjoyment; it possesses an imperativeness, or exercises a force upon us, quite different from that which is exercised by the consideration of pleasure only. If then we *still* call our theory utilitarianism, it must not be with a notion that it is any longer resting upon the merely positivist basis of what men *do* desire, even though, inconsistently, it should go on to convert its generalization from this into an ideal of what men ought to desire. Indeed the difference between the doctrine which is, and the doctrine which is not, utilitarianism can hardly be more aptly described than by saying that the latter would educate us to a happiness more or less dependent on considerations of right, duty, virtue, while the former would make all these ideas dependent on that of happiness: and if we speak of kinds or qualities of happiness, one superior to the other, it must surely be on some of the above considerations that the superiority depends. We have then a philosophy of happiness as εὐδαιμονία, or a lofty ideal of what man may rise to, entirely different from a philosophy of happiness as ἡδονή, or the fact of enjoyment as unaffected by man's will and his moral nature.

Mr Mill's 'quality'

Mr Mill hovers between these two, between

an aspiring and truly ideal utilitarianism or lofty eudæmonism, and a utilitarianism on the merely Epicurean basis of measurement of pleasures. He endeavours to mend the old utilitarianism by adding quality of pleasure to quantity, but immediately neutralizes this by saying in effect that this quality is quantity estimated in a different manner, namely, not by definite analysis, which was Bentham's method, but by human experience and testimony without such analysis.

is merely 'quantity' estimated not by definite analysis but by unanalyzed experience.

When however, in the comparison of two pleasures, he speaks of our going by the experience of those who have tried both[1], he does not sufficiently explain whether those who thus tell us their experience are to be considered as giving us *testimony* or *opinion*[2]. If the former, then there is no

Is this experience to be regarded as embodying opinion as well as testimony?

[1] *Util.* p. 12.

[2] Mr Mill's words 'of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have had experience of both give a decided preference, that is the more desirable pleasure,' seem clearly to show that he would make this a matter of *testimony*. It is in fact much the same argument which we find in Plato's *Republic*, IX. 581, where the pleasure arising from the pursuit of knowledge is shown to be superior to the pleasure arising from the pursuit of gain or of honour, on the ground that the man of intellect alone has experience of all three kinds of pleasure and that he prefers that which arises from the pursuit of knowledge.

It is plain however in the first place that there is nothing like the unanimity which Mr Mill supposes with regard to the comparison of higher and lower pleasures, and in the next place that in practice it is not bare testimony, but the opinion of those whom they consider good judges, by which people are guided. With regard to the first point Mr Mill himself tells us that 'many who begin with youthful enthusiasm for every thing noble, as they advance in years sink into indolence and selfishness.' Here then we have a case of persons who have had experience of both kinds of pleasure and yet prefer the lower. Mr Mill's answer is, that when they so prefer they have lost their susceptibility for the higher pleasure. Might not the same objection be made in the converse case of one who beginning with a love of sport or amusement, at a later age becomes absorbed in science or politics? Might not a younger man refuse to be influenced by example in this latter case, on the ground that men as they advance in life lose their susceptibility to the superior pleasures which are the exclusive property of youth?

occasion to introduce the mention of them: their experience only stands in the place of what might possibly have been our own, and more satisfactorily would have been so: a witness is only our own senses at second-hand and with much uncertainty; and we have only the same comparison of pleasures which Paley gives, now in an inferior form. If the experience told embodies more than testimony, namely, opinion and sentiment, what makes us value that opinion and sentiment, and more from one person than from another? What the matter *then* comes to is, that the pleasure most valued by a man whom we think worthier than others we ourselves most value: we estimate the worthiness of pleasures by observing what people value them. In this view

The question will then arise, why are we justified in accepting the testimony of the man who has lost his susceptibility to the one kind of pleasure rather than that of him who has lost his susceptibility to the other kind? And this a question which cannot be settled by any comparison of pleasures.

In the next place, even if we are comparing together pleasures of the same kind, we are not content to go merely by the experience of any one who may happen to have tried them: we require to know something of the fitness of the person to be a judge. To be told, for instance, that the majority of people prefer such a wine, or such a novel, or such an opera, would be to others a proof that they would find no pleasure in them. 'I know I shall *not* like it, because B *does*,' is as good reasoning as, 'I know I *shall* like it, because A does.'

The words in the text 'their experience only stands in place of what might more satisfactorily have been our own,' are not of course intended to mean that we are never at liberty to save ourselves a painful or hurtful experience by making use of the experience of others. This is apparent from the language used in p. 51 about the danger of 'people being tempted to try the different sorts of pleasure for themselves.' The reference is, I think, to that which is more fully stated elsewhere, that the comparison of pleasures which differ in quality must really rest upon the comparison of the faculties which they call out, or the parts of our nature which enter into them; and this latter comparison is one which every one is bound to have made for himself; to feel, for instance, that the active exercise of the bodily powers is better than eating or sleeping, that in activity of mind there is something better than in activity of body, and therefore that the pleasures attaching to the one are higher than the pleasures attaching to the other. ED.

the different worthiness of pleasures is fully recognized: and this *manner* of doing it is most practical and most common. But what makes the people themselves such that we care for their opinion? Mr Mill, I think, on principles of utilitarianism, could not tell us. The sentiment and opinion which these people form is only what we ought, so far as it is possible, to form ourselves. And if we are to form such an opinion, their experience should be one thing, but only one, to help our forming it. Besides looking to that, we may look to the pleasures themselves, and see if there are not *reasons* why one should be better than the other.

Mr Mill here mixes up incompatible modes of thinking. If, as he allows, certain faculties are higher than others, the appeal to experience is not needed in regard to pleasures arising from the exercise of such faculties.

I should say then that, while Mr Mill in reference to quality of pleasure fully recognizes what I have called idealism, he attempts to base it upon positivism or experience in a manner which seems to me both erroneous and useless. Take for instance such a sentence as 'Now it is an unquestionable fact that those who are equally acquainted with, and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying both, do give a most marked preference to the manner of existence which employs their higher faculties' (p. 12). The word 'higher,' a word of doubtful import of which I have spoken further on, evidently involves something in the nature of idealism. And the point in which I differ (which I indicate the rather because it is the *real* point of our difference all through) is this: if it is admitted that we have some faculties higher than others, why is it necessary, before determining our action, to wait to see whether or not others, whoever they are, give a preference to the manner of existence which employs those faculties? This fact of positivism or experience seems to me irrelevant, or at least quite subsidiary. If the faculties are thus 'higher,' let them, *as such,* determine

our action, not in virtue of their determining the action of such and such people. This appeal to positivism is merely making us live at second-hand. If the expression, 'capable of appreciating both,' is intended to denote the sort of worthiness of which I have spoken, there is some reason in what is said: but I think Mr Mill is uniting various incompatible modes of thinking together. A page forward he describes the tribunal to which he here alludes as a tribunal of which the judgment goes by 'the general suffrage of those who are familiar with both' (two pains or two pleasures). Here the appeal seems rather to the multitude, than to any special competence or worthiness in the judges. Here we come nearer to Bentham, and leave our ideas of higher and lower. But have we not a proof in all this, that these appeals to fact and experience do not touch the most real experience? The experience we have to regard is, in the first instance, *our own*, and it is a more important fact of experience to us that we ourselves imagine there is something we should do, and look out for that, and regard ourselves as possessed of higher and lower faculties, than it is that others judge in whatever way they do judge about pleasures.

Such an appeal to experience has only a limited practical, and hardly any theoretical, value.

But without analysing too closely the word experience, let us take it in the wide way in which it is frequently used by philosophers, to signify the result of our own or others' observation. It is no doubt a ready application of human experience, for one person to say to another, 'I have tried both those pleasures: I know the pleasure of literary investigation, and the pleasure of drunkenness; and I can assure you that an hour of the one is worth days of the other:' or, 'my early days were passed in excess, my later in domestic quiet; and I can

assure you the later have been far the happier.' But when we come to make this sort of communication of experience general enough for a philosophical theory, difficulties arise. As it is, such assurings do not produce upon other minds as much effect as we should expect: the comparison is demurred to, for, to be complete, it requires that the mind of the comparer should be in the same state, and judge in the same manner, at the time of the one pleasure as at that of the other: and if our moral action had to depend much on comparison of this kind, there would be more temptation than is desirable for people to try for themselves the different sorts of pleasure. And after all we want more categories than that of quality added to quantity, to enable us to bring the very heterogeneous elements which compose pleasure into any relation with each other which can be of philosophical value.

Perhaps it may be well to explain more fully the two points brought out in the last paragraphs, first, that on principles of utilitarianism there cannot be any real significance in the distinction of quality in pleasure; second, that as a matter of fact it is not possible to compare pleasures in the way supposed.

Relative preferability ascertained by experience only shows difference of quantity; difference of quality implies consciousness of a reason for the difference: one pleasure is really superior to an-

Mr Mill's idea of the difference of quality attaching to pleasures is little other than that of relative preferability: and this preferability he makes matter again of simple experience. Strictly speaking, we should rather call it actual preferredness; that is, the preferability is known only by actual preference on the part of those who have had experience in such a manner as to be fit judges. In this view quality becomes merely a more refined quantity. After all, Paley would say, it is only that there is so much the more intensity in the pleasure which is the preferable one of the two: if you determine your

other because it belongs to a different region of thought and feeling.

preferableness only by actual experience, you have but quantity after all. So far as we have a consciousness, in reference to the pleasure, not only that it is greater than another, but that it is of a different *kind*, or that its quality is really different, we must be conscious of something of *a reason why* it is greater than the other: and here it is that we have the consideration alien to utilitarianism, the appeal from sense to reason, or from experience to something different from it. As soon as Mr Mill gets out of the arithmetic of pleasures which Bentham thought was possible, he really leaves utilitarianism: as soon as we begin to speak with meaning of the *quality* of pleasure, we begin to confess that we cannot rightly discuss and reason about happiness and pleasure without taking into account many things besides. Happiness is a function of life: one pleasure is superior in quality to another because it belongs to a different region of thought and feeling; we not only feel it preferable, but we understand more or less why it is so; in the case of some of the highest pleasures it is probable that we never should come to feel them, so as to know of ourselves their preferability, without mounting in thought, before we feel them, to the region to which they belong.

Difference of quality is not capable of being measured.

A consistent utilitarian can scarcely hold the difference of *quality* in pleasures in *any* sense: for if they differ otherwise than in what, speaking largely, may be called *quantity*, they are not mutually comparable, and in determining as to the preferability of one pleasure to another, we must then be guided by some considerations not contained in the idea or experience of the pleasure itself. But all Epicurean utilitarianism *must* rest on the idea that pleasures *are* mutually comparable, and that it is the greater

pleasure which must determine our action. If we allow the notion of one pleasure being *better* than another in any other way than as greater, we not only introduce Stoic elements[1], but migrate bodily over to Stoicism. By difference of quality, as distinguished from difference of quantity, we just mean that the juxtaposition of the things or ideas, by themselves, makes us aware of no relation between them: utilitarianism must *measure* pleasures, and difference of what is really quality, as distinguished from quantity, is not mensurable.

Pleasures depend upon the nature of the individual mind, and cannot be compared for scientific purposes.

What Mr Mill says of the comparison of one pleasure with another by means of the experience of those who have tried both, is of interest, and is practical, but I think that, as in utilitarianism generally, so here, things are raised to philosophical importance which have really no claim to such importance, though in practice and in their place they have doubtless their value. Ever since the world began, the experience of the older has been brought to bear upon the younger in the matter of pleasure. Advice founded on this experience has constantly had some effect, but as constantly failed to produce the amount of effect which might have been anticipated from it: exception has tacitly been taken more or less to the fairness and completeness of the comparison of pleasures made. The fact is, two pleasures cannot be tasted with a view to the comparison of them, as a chemist may taste two fluids: the utilitarian is led astray by his language, talking as he does about pleasures as if they were separate entities, independent of the mind of the enjoyer of them: the pleasures are always mixed with something from ourselves, which prevents us from speaking, with any philosophically good result, of this

[1] *Util.* p. 11.

sort of independent comparability among them. The practical experience of those whose life has been varied, and whose intellect and feeling have been alive, is of infinite interest to us and of very great moral importance: but after all it furnishes us with nothing of that sort of experimentation as to the relative preferability of pleasures, analogous to the experimentalism of physical science, which is required for us to erect this experience into a measure of the comparative greatness of pleasures, such as may determine for us our whole moral action.

The individual mind itself changes, so that the same person cannot compare past and present pleasures.

As a matter of fact we do not look upon pleasures as independent things to be thus compared with each other, but as interwoven with the rest of life, as having their history and their reasons, as involving different kinds of enjoyment in such a manner that our being able to enter into one kind is accompanied with a horror of another kind, which would entirely prevent the comparison of the one with the other as pleasures. Besides this, it must be remembered that, in the interval between the one pleasure and the other, the mind itself is changed: you have no permanent touchstone, no currency to be the medium of the comparison. Supposing a man whose youth has been grossly vicious, whose mature age is most deeply devout: according to disposition, the view as to past life in this case will probably much differ: but most commonly I think the man will wonder that he was ever able to find pleasure at all in what he once found pleasure in. Earnestness in the later frame of mind, whatever it is, would only preclude the possibility of a cool comparison of it, as to pleasure, with the earlier one.

Impossibility of framing a

I do not think that any person who considers really what life is, while undoubtedly he acknow-

ledges that this comparability among different sorts of pleasure, as pleasure, is to a certain extent real and what we act upon, will ever imagine that it can be to us a moral guide, or a basis for moral philosophy. We have, most of us, our own pleasures, and other people's pleasures often seem to us none at all. I cannot understand a happiness for everybody, after we have gone beyond our universal wants of meat, drink, and shelter, and till we arrive at a sphere where pleasure may be of a temper and nature which at present we cannot enter into. I cannot understand a general scale of pleasures, in which so many marks will be given to drunkenness, so many to love of the fine arts, so many to something else, according to the experience of those who have tried more than one of them. The experience and the comparison is I am aware a fact, and a fact for moral philosophy to use: but it is but one fact, and its application and use but limited.

Scale of pleasures.

When we urge upon any, as doubtless we often do, 'Follow such and such conduct, it is what will make you happy,' we may of course appeal to the experience of one and another, and to their saying how it has made *them* happy, but we more often I think shall give reasons why it will make the particular person whom we are advising happy, *i.e.* we shall travel out of the simple pleasure to other considerations. No moral philosophy can speak with any authority to a man while dictating to him his happiness, unless it gives him the reason why it is his happiness: otherwise, if he says he would rather try for himself whether it is, I do not know what we are to answer.

Advice has no authority unless it goes beyond considerations of pleasure.

In reality, the reason of the insufficiency of experience, whether our own or that of others, to value pleasures by, seems to me to lie in the nature of

Experience in this respect is of less value, be-

cause pleasure does not admit of being made the direct object of attention.

pleasure itself: it will not bear to be looked too straight at, to be made too much, itself, the object and centre of view. Our own experience on the matter I should be disposed to rate exceedingly highly, so much so, that I should consider quite as important a point of happiness as any which Mr Mill or Paley has given, to be the finding out by experience what will make our happiness, in the same way as we find what is good for our health; and people are only too much disposed, I think, to go by the 'general suffrage.' Nor have I any wish to deny the importance of the experience of others as aiding us to form a just estimate of the relative value of pleasures: I only demur to the making it so large a part of the foundation of our moral duty. The reference to it or study of it comes in as one of the investigations subsidiary to ethics, and as a most important one.

The two schools of philosophy should study to throw light on happiness in their respective methods.

And so in respect to the science in general, which may be conceived as answering the question, What is human happiness and how may it best be promoted? as I have said before, I have no wish to depreciate this science, if so it is to be called. It does not belong to utilitarianism alone, nor is it to be supposed that those who are not utilitarians deny the value of it, or have been negligent in the study of it. Let utilitarians have the credit of having tried to introduce more of system than there had previously been in it, though I cannot think their systematizing, as witness that of Bentham, very happy. But at present the study is open ground to all: valuable discoveries in it would be a greater glory of our age than all its material triumphs: the contest between utilitarianism and intuitivism[1] (so to call it) is now, if we look at things rather than

[1] *Util.* p. 3.

words, so old, and so unsatisfactory, that perhaps it would be well it should be transformed into a rivalry which of the two, each following its own line of thought, can best bring out and commend to the general understanding such truths about man's nature as are of importance for man's happiness. Let them try which shall make most way in giving us such an account of human life, as shall meet all the facts of it, embrace all its elements, and so far as it proposes an ideal to look forward to, give us one which we really recognize as a sufficient and a worthy one. My own feeling is, that the foundations for such a work as this must be laid deeper than utilitarianism lays them.

CHAPTER IV.

PROOF OF UTILITARIANISM.

I COME now to Mr Mill's proof of utilitarianism, or rather of that particular form of utilitarianism of which he is the author.

Five different kinds of utilitarianism.

It may be a little anticipating, but I think it as well to say here, that the term *utilitarianism* is applied in this Essay in four, or more properly five, different manners. I am not responsible for this variety of application: what I have endeavoured to do has been to bring the (as it seems to me) very vague application of the term by Mr Mill under heads which may be described as follows:

1. Abstract utilitarianism. Happiness the absolute end.

1. That utilitarianism which belongs to all moral philosophy alike[1]. This is the admission of the axiom as valid in the very beginning of all things, if we like to form such a conception, or in an absolute sphere of thought, that the value of action is its conduciveness to *some* happiness: or putting the proposition in a negative form, that action which produces no happiness of anybody or anything, is wasted in the universe of action, and such as produces the opposite of happiness worse than wasted: both being therefore wrong.

2. Philosophical utilitarianism:

2. What I have called philosophical utilitarianism is the taking this axiom, maintaining its truth

[1] See Appendix at the end of the chapter.

not only in the sphere of thought above described, but universally and under all circumstances, and maintaining besides that it is the one important axiom of morality, all others deriving themselves in one way or another from this. What I have endeavoured to show in this Essay is, that in the moral philosophy of *man* this axiom is only true in a qualified form and in conjunction with others of equal importance. Philosophical utilitarianism entirely misrepresents morality[1].

applying the abstract principle to actual human life. An action is morally valuable only as conducive to happiness.

3. The utilitarianism of Paley and Bentham (against which the objections have been made which Mr Mill undertakes to refute) is the association of the above axiom, more or less distinctly brought out, with the Epicurean or (commonly called) selfish theory of morals as concerns the *facts* of human motive, and with the view of virtue as simple benevolence as concerns the *rule* of human action. According to Paley, what each man values is only his own happiness, but God values the happiness of *all*, and enforces *His* view upon man by promises and penalties. Bentham seems to present *all* happiness, both his own and that of others, as valuable in the view of each man: but he seems to avow, as to fact, an

3. Old utilitarianism: virtually making the happiness of others secondary.

[1] The meaning of these two paragraphs may be made clearer by the following passage taken from another MS. of Prof. Grote's. "We may say, probably truly, that the ultimate constituent of moral value in actions is benefit derived from them to some sentient being, and felt in some way or other as such by him. But the conversion of this ultimate and general fact into the near and particular one, that actions are only good in so far as they are visibly useful or felicific, changes its nature altogether. Truth and mutual confidence may be said to have been created as laws of the moral universe in the creation of intelligent beings such as, supposing the existence of these laws, could cooperate with each other to their general benefit. But the supposition of the usefulness of truth as a thing requiring to be proved now, in order to commend or justify our acting truthfully, puts things out of their place in morality and gives quite a wrong idea of the moral value of truth." Ed.

Epicurean view, and fails to give a sufficient account how, upon such a view, people *come* to value independently the happiness of others.

4. New utilitarianism: meeting objections by introducing foreign elements.

4. Mr Mill's neo-utilitarianism seems to me an attempt, by filling up a variety of weak places in this last philosophy (though in so doing he destroys much of the character of the building) to raise it into a real philosophical utilitarianism such as I described before, and then, by transferring to this latter from other philosophies various principles, such as the Stoic sociality, which do not properly belong to it, to make it a complete building, and lead us to suppose that the foundation is complete also.

5. Practical utilitarianism: independent of philosophy.

5. The practical or reforming utilitarianism of Bentham is something which does not necessarily involve his utilitarian philosophy: of this practical utilitarianism I shall speak further on[1].

Perhaps the preceding analysis may help the reader in some tangled matter that is before us.

I will next make a remark on an expression of Mr Mill's: the expression, I mean, of feelings being 'moralized[2].'

Moralization of natural feeling by the principle of sociality.

There is only one real difficulty, Mr Mill thinks, in the utilitarian theory of morals. This is, the peculiar sentiment which attaches to cases of justice, as contradistinguished from cases of expediency[3]. And the view of this sentiment which renders the difficulty no longer a difficulty, is, that 'it is simply the natural feeling of resentment, moralized by being made coextensive with the demands of social good.'

This applies to the desire of happiness no less than to the feel-

Now I should have thought that any one, in reading this description of the sentiment of justice and of the morality or moralness which belongs to it, would have considered that just the same language

[1] See below, ch. XVI. [2] *Util.* p. 76. [3] p. 61.

would hold, if for justice we put benevolence or philanthropy, and for resentment that desire of happiness or acting for happiness which, in one form or another, we all consider the primary or immediate motive of human action. Benevolence (or virtue, in this sense of it,) is this 'acting for happiness,' 'moralized by being made coextensive with the demands of social good.' It is not the action being for happiness that makes it right or moral for man, but this love of happiness requires to be 'moralized' just in the same manner as resentment does: and the moralizing principle in both cases is the same, namely, the desire of, and tendency to, social good. Rightness of action is thus not conduciveness to happiness simply, but is conduciveness to social happiness, or social good. And that the adjective is more important in the phrase here than the substantive, we may see from this: that while conduciveness to happiness, or the demands of happiness, or of good, simply, will not express the moralizing principle we want, conduciveness to sociality, or the demands of society, will.

ing of resentment.

To show that I am not making use here, for my purpose, of particular phrases only and sentences which do not express general views, it will be sufficient, I think, to turn to Mr Mill's third chapter, more especially to p. 45. We here find a description of the moralizing power of 'the demands of social good,' a description as complete and beautiful, I think, as is to be found in any moral writings We find a full recognition of 'the social feelings of mankind,' and 'the desire to be in unity with our fellow-creatures.' 'The social state' is spoken of as 'natural, necessary, and habitual to men:' and the manner in which this is so is shown most admirably. I may be wrong, but it appears to me that Mr Mill

Mr Mill has shown how the natural desire of our own happiness is thus moralized.

writes with more force and more feeling about social feeling or social happiness, as throughout this chapter, than he does when he is writing as a true utilitarian about happiness in that unindividual, unincorporate, abstract notion of it, in which the utilitarian view represents it as giving to actions their moral value. Write as we may, the difference to our view of the happiness of ourselves and the happiness of others is a thought which must suggest itself: when we write about bare *happiness,* as if this difference did not exist, we write merely unreally: it is when, as Mr Mill in this third chapter, we write of the relation of one of these to the other, and show how the social feeling carries us from one to the other, or, in the words before used, 'moralizes' the merely natural acting for happiness (happiness of course in the first instance *our own*), that we come to what is *real* and interesting. There are one or two errors, it appears to me, in Mr Mill's description of man's social feelings and social state by nature, which I may perhaps notice presently: but the description is very noble and very beautiful.

In writing thus he ceases to be a utilitarian, and might rather be called a societarian.

If it were not therefore for the professed purpose and plan of these papers to defend utilitarianism, I should myself be inclined rather to call Mr Mill a societarian, if we must have new and sectarian words, than an utilitarian in the sense in which he himself defines and describes utilitarianism. He writes about man's natural sociality as if he were a mere Peripatetic or Stoic, or anything rather than the Epicurean he would be, and he writes about the feeling of pain attendant on the violation of duty almost as if he were a mere emotionalist. The Epicureanism which lies at the base of utilitarianism would, he tells us, admit and be the better for some Stoic elements, and utilitarians in his view might have said much which

they have not said[1]. It seems to me that in his utilitarianism the Stoic intrusion has quite overwhelmed the original occupancy: and that if utilitarians had from the beginning said a good deal of what they here say in his person, the name of utilitarianism would never have been heard of, nor many of the objections against it.

Mr Mill's proof of utilitarianism stated.

I come now to Mr Mill's proof of utilitarianism[2]. I am not much concerned with the logical conclusiveness of it. Mr Mill admits that what he says will most likely appear merely 'obvious[3],' and yet is not 'proof in the ordinary meaning of the term[4]:' in fact the subject does not admit of it. But it is important to observe the manner of thinking which the proof involves, and what it is that is proved.

The course of proof appears to be this (going backwards): we know happiness to be 'the criterion of morality[5],' because we know it to be 'the sole end of human action:' we know this last again, because we know it to be 'a psychological fact,' that 'human nature is so constituted as to desire nothing which is not either a part of happiness or a means of happiness:' *this* we know 'by practised self-consciousness and observation, assisted by the observation of others:' it is the matter of fact and experience upon which the whole depends. And Mr Mill gravely speaks of this as a fact which we might possibly doubt, as if, previous to observation, it was quite as natural to suppose that men might desire the unpleasant and undesirable (not by mistake but as such) as the desirable; as if the terms or notions they involve, had no correlation with each other. He treats it as a matter 'to be decided,' as a matter on which 'evi-

[1] *Util.* p. 11. [2] Ch. IV.
[3] p. 58. [4] pp. 6, 51. [5] p. 57.

dence must be impartially consulted,' whether we may or may not say that 'desiring a thing and finding it pleasant, aversion to it and thinking of it as painful, are phenomena entirely inseparable,' and so forth. Such doubtfulness as there may be in utilitarianism is to be solved, it would appear, by the deciding of this question, as a matter of experiment.

It is an attempt to base upon experience that which cannot be proved from experience, viz. that happiness is the sole criterion of morality.

I draw attention to this, because I seem to trace in it the same proceeding on the part of Mr Mill to which I have before drawn attention in the case of quality of happiness: the desire namely to put that upon the ground of experience and observation which does not belong to it, and while taking account of an ideal, to attempt to build it, from the first, upon the positive, which will bear no such structure. Mr Mill says[1], 'From the dawn of philosophy the question concerning the *summum bonum* has been accounted the main problem in speculative thought.' He is doing his part to solve it. But surely he cannot mean that it is solved by the laying down, as a supposed fact of observation, that what men really desire is that which is pleasant to them. Is the doubtfulness which has hitherto attended the question, and which observation has now at last put an end to, the doubtfulness whether men really do this? Mr Mill has to prove that 'happiness,' as the ideal *summum bonum* of man, is the one thing which ought to regulate his conduct (as he calls it, the sole criterion of morality): this is not a thing that *any* observation can prove, and it is quite a vain proceeding to set observation, as Mr Mill does, to warrant a truism, and then to say that in doing so it proves a point entirely different.

Ambiguity of the word 'desirable' in his proof.

So much as to the form or manner of Mr Mill's proof. The reference to observation or experience

[1] p. 1.

shows mistake as to what is wanted. We want observation to show us in detail, what are the things which man desires, but we do not want it to show us that he desires the desirable. If by the *desirable* we mean the *pleasant*, that is equivalent in meaning to the *actually desired*, and observation is not needed, the proposition being what I have called a truism, and the truth of it involved in the words. If by the desirable we mean the *ideally desirable*, the *summum bonum*, that which is good for man or makes his welfare, it is certainly no fact of observation that man desires this, for he constantly does not do so. But it is not in this manner that any moral theory is to be proved so far as it is capable of proof[1].

[1] Perhaps the argument may be more clearly stated thus:
The steps of Mr Mill's proof are

A. Man desires happiness: therefore happiness is desirable. p. 52.

B. Man desires happiness alone: therefore happiness alone is desirable. p. 56.

C. Happiness then is the sole end of human action: the promotion of happiness is the test by which to judge of all human conduct: it is therefore the criterion of morality. p. 57.

The author begins by objecting that A and B are unnecessary, since happiness may be defined as *the desirable* (which viewed abstractly without reference to particular experience may be considered equivalent to *the desired*). But not only are A and B unnecessary, they are also untrue; for in the concrete *the desired* is not equivalent to *the desirable*. Either it is false to say that man (that is, all men) desires happiness, or it is false to say that happiness is the desirable. To have a true logical conversion the propositions must be altered thus, 'all men desire pleasure, therefore pleasure is the desired,' 'all men ought to desire happiness, therefore happiness is the desirable.'

[The analogy by which Mr Mill supports his argument here deserves attention though it has not been noticed by Prof. Grote. He says (p. 51) 'The only proof capable of being given that an object is visible is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible is that people hear it. In like manner the sole evidence it is possible to produce that any thing is desirable is that people do actually desire it.' But by *visible* and *audible* we mean capable of being seen and heard, and in this case the argument holds good; if an object is seen, it must have had the capacity of being seen; the latter proposition is merely a restatement of a part of the former. But the word *desirable* does not mean capable of being desired, but deserving to be desired, and in the

I will now discuss Mr Mill's proof of utilitarianism more generally, and see what it does seem to prove, if anything.

Mr Mill begins with the assumption that the ultimate question of morality is the *summum bonum*, happiness; why might it not be the *summum faciendum*, duty?

Mr Mill tells us[1], that the question concerning the *summum bonum* (or chief good), is the same as the question concerning the foundations of morality, and no doubt there is truth in this. Only it is to be observed, that when the ultimate τέλος or *finis*, the guiding principle and aim of human action, is put in the form of the *summum bonum*, a certain degree of what might be called utilitarianism is assumed already. All reasonable action is action to an end or for a purpose: such is the idea of reason as applied to action: but the end or purpose need not necessarily be something to be attained or gained in the way of possession or enjoyment, which is what is implied in the phrase *summum bonum;* it may be something to be *done*. And in this respect there lies at

argument, 'an object is desired therefore it is desirable,' the latter proposition gives a new statement quite independent of that which was contained in the former].

Happiness then is the desirable. Does it follow that it is the sole end of action? This is denied in the text; 'the end need not be something to be attained in the way of enjoyment, it may be something to be done,' 'there may be work for man to do independent of conscious effort after happiness,' p. 69. Nor again, though it were granted that happiness is the sole end of action, would it therefore follow that the promotion of happiness is the test of all human conduct; 'though action must have an end in order to be reasonable, and our object must be to find the proper end for it, it is not necessary that it should have no value other than what is given it by this end;' 'to give value to action, goodness in purpose and result is not more required on the one hand than goodness in principle and manner on the other,' (ch. VI.). Promotion of happiness is therefore not the sole criterion of morality, on the contrary unless the idea of happiness is very carefully defined, it is no criterion of morality at all (p. 74).

The argument which follows, based on Mr Mill's use of the phrase *summum bonum*, seems to me to turn too much upon the particular phrase, which is introduced casually by him, and perhaps not with the same definite meaning which is assigned to it by Prof. Grote.—ED.

[1] p. 1.

the root of morals a difference of view. It may be expressed roughly by saying, that the thing which we are anxious about, the thing which suggests itself to us as of importance, may either be to find our happiness, or to find our proper work. In reflecting upon ourselves, we are aware of ourselves both as active beings, and also as beings susceptible of enjoyment. Now that, on the most abstract view, this latter thing is *one* thing to be taken account of when we are judging what should be the purpose of human action, there can be no doubt: but the saying, that the question concerning the foundation of morals is the same as that concerning the *summum bonum*, is in fact saying that susceptibility to enjoyment is the *only* thing which need be taken into account, and this requires proof. Finding ourselves, as we do, born into an existing world of men and state of things, with every reason to believe it to be a portion of a wider moral universe of which God is the head, the form in which possibly the moral question may present itself to us may be, What is *our* part in all this? What is it intended, if we may suppose any meaning or intention in our existence here, that we should do? This is the idea of action being right or wrong, as distinguished from the idea of it as better or worse, more or less desirable. This is the idea of the *summum jus*, the *faciendum*, the notion of *duty*, under which the moral question may in some circumstances present itself to us, rather than in the idea of the *summum bonum*, the *acquirendum*, the notion of *happiness*.

[Limitations under which it might be granted that the felicific property of

I have no wish to deny that possibly, if we could look at the very rudiments of things, it might be the *felicific* property of an action, its contributiveness to the great purpose of universal good, which should be taken as the root of its value. Such simple action

an action is the root of its value.] for happiness we might consider the action of God: though here we are in a difficulty, because previously to the existence of anything besides Himself, there is beyond Himself no susceptibility of happiness, and after the commencement of other things there is already something besides simple happiness to be taken account of, namely, the distribution of happiness; that is, there has already begun the idea of duty, of something which ought to be done rather than something else. I will not dwell on this now[1].

But in regard to man, though the idea of the *summum bonum*, the absolute ἀγαθόν, the good or desirable, is doubtless a great and leading one, yet even the very rudimentary and imperfect, the vague and indefinite, utilitarianism, which is implied in saying that it is *the* idea of morality, that into which others will resolve themselves, requires proof; and in proving, as he considers he does, utilitarianism to be true, all that Mr Mill even makes a show of proving is this, which he had previously assumed: and whether he does prove even this, we shall see.

In this assumption Mr Mill assumes all, and more than all, which he attempts to prove afterwards. What Mr Mill proves, in the place where he considers that he is proving utilitarianism to be the real and only moral philosophy, (so far as anything of the sort is capable of proof,) seems to me to be only that men desire happiness or what is pleasant, or, in other words, that it is happiness that is desirable. Now this is what no one doubts and what needs no proving, as indeed Mr Mill's proof of it is simple enough, consisting of hardly more than statement of it: the various terms here used, independently of the following them out into details and particulars, may be considered as all meaning the same thing: the τὸ

[1] See this more fully and somewhat differently treated in the Appendix to this chapter, and compare also Ch. VI.—ED.

ἀγαθόν, or what is a good to us, is simply the desired and desirable: in speaking of the need, for morality, of knowing what is the *summum bonum*, Mr Mill had already assumed all he proves here. In fact he had assumed more. For though he may prove that happiness is all that men desire, he does not prove that it is all that they think about, or that nothing but what they desire is of importance to them. As I have said, it is a thing which may very well suggest itself to people, and I believe sometimes does, that there may be work, business, duty, whatever we may call it, for them to do independent of conscious effort after any happiness, and Mr Mill has not proved that utilitarianism even in this rudimentary form is the only moral philosophy, or that the *summum bonum* is all that men need think of, till he has proved not only, as he does, that men desire happiness, and nothing else but happiness, but also that it is nothing else but what they desire that they need take any moral account of.

Even if we grant him to have shewn that happiness is the sole principle of morality, still there is nothing to authorize the insertion of the word 'general' before 'happiness.'

But next, supposing even that this very rudimentary utilitarianism were proved, and that we might assume it as a principle of ethics, that all we had to seek for was man's real happiness, and that we might dismiss from our mind all consideration of there being possibly an ἀνθρώπινον ἔργον, a proper work or duty of man; (and doubtless if we are sure of man's real happiness, we have his work given to us, in the same manner as if we knew his work, we should have his happiness given); we must consider how far the proof will carry us, for it is but a very little way. In Mr Mill's proof, if the reader will watch the third paragraph of the fourth chapter, he will see that the important word 'general' before 'happiness,' which, to use Mr Mill's former language, is the specially *moralizing* word, comes in without anything in the proof

to authorize it. Mr Mill's proof of utilitarianism is in fact simply showing that the desire of happiness is natural to man; but so he tells us in the passage I first quoted that resentment is natural to man. As he shows us in that place how resentment is 'moralized'; so and by a similar method the natural desire of happiness admits and needs 'moralizing': the natural desire is not of *the general* happiness in the first instance, till social feelings and moral teaching have had time to work, and this working is the moralizing of this latter feeling in the same way as the other was moralized. 'Each person's happiness,' says Mr Mill, 'is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons[1].' We are talking here of 'a good' as an 'end of action': let us substitute the equivalent term, and the argument then will be that as each man's happiness is 'the end of action' to him, so the general happiness is 'the end of action' to the aggregate. Except so far as 'the aggregate' can act, this latter clause is unmeaning. But Mr Mill seems to consider that he has proved that, in the same natural

He entirely fails to shew that the aggregate happiness is naturally desired by each individual of the aggregate.

[1] *Util.* p. 52. Mr Mill's argument is really an instance of the 'fallacy of composition,' in which the word *all* is used at one time distributively, at another time collectively. Thus: each human being A, B, C, &c. naturally desires his own happiness; but A, B, C, &c. make up all human beings, and the happiness of A, B, C, &c. makes up the happiness of all human beings; therefore every human being naturally desires the happiness of all human beings. Taking it out of the abstract the proposition becomes still more glaringly untenable. Two men place their happiness in the exclusive possession of the same thing, a third places his happiness in the positive unhappiness of one who, he thinks, has wronged him. Thus the resultant of several (or all) men's individual happiness might well be the general unhappiness.

The fact is, this is an attempt on the part of the utilitarians to extend to morality the principle, true under certain limitations in political economy, that the public wealth is best promoted by each man's aiming at his own private wealth and occupying himself exclusively with that.—Ed.

manner in which a man's happiness is an end to him, the aggregate happiness is an end to *each individual* of the aggregate. Mr Mill in other places, as we have seen, shows most admirably how it may *become* so: but if his proof here had held good, there would have been no need to show this; what I have called his 'societarianism' would have been superfluous.

In reality, ethical science does not seem, in this capital point of the relation of the individual or portion to the aggregate or whole, to have got beyond the point at which Plato set it, and something of the so-called progress of it consists in evading the difficulty which he endeavoured to face. The general interest and the action for that on the one side are not like the individual interest and the action for it on the other, a single object commending itself to a single will. There is an analogy, and it is better to exhibit the analogy, even with risk of mistake in the details, as Plato does, than to confound together two essentially different things, as I think Mr Mill does. Justice in 'the aggregate' is analogous to self-control in the individual: but the analogy is complicated. In the individual considered by himself there is a simple or uniform generating of force, and there is correspondingly a simple or uniform object which prudence has in view in controlling and directing that force, viz. the individual's happiness. Within 'the aggregate' there is a multitude of separate and independent sources or generatings of force, which have each a double object exhibiting itself to them, viz. the particular or individual interest as described above, which is different for each such spring of force, and the aggregate interest, which is the same for all. The purpose of ethics is to make this general interest impress itself upon the particular wills, (which are what really act,) as the proper object of their

He confounds together particular and general interest, and evades the real difficulty of morals, which is to make the general interest impress itself upon the particular wills.

action, to the limitation (at least) of the particular interests. 'Each person's happiness,' Mr Mill rightly says, 'is a good to each,' and he draws from this a conclusion which seems to me of very little significance: the real point of morals, which utilitarianism evades, is the knowing how to meet any one who concludes thus, Since then it is *my* happiness that is the good to *me*, it is *not* the general happiness that is so, and there is no reason that *I* at least should act for *that*. The more a man's particular happiness appears a good to him, the more it is likely to engross his action, and the *less* he is likely to think of the happiness of the aggregate.

The vague use of the word 'happiness' in the proof is inconsistent with the previous use (which makes it equivalent to felt pleasure), and it is not one which would be allowed by the old utilitarians.

I said that the various terms, happiness, the desirable, the pleasant, &c., might all be considered as meaning the same thing, independently of the carrying them out into particulars. And as soon as they are carried out into particulars, the proof will hold no longer. It appears to me that there is an inconsistency between what Mr Mill says in his second chapter, where he follows the Epicureans in developing the idea of happiness into definite, measurable, describable pleasure, to be tested by experience, and what he says in the fourth chapter, where he is proving that happiness is the only thing which men desire, because other things, such as virtue, which they may desire, and which appear different from happiness, are really, if only men desire them, a part of their happiness[1]. If happiness is to be kept in this latter generality, which is necessary for Mr Mill's object in the fourth chapter, it must not, as in the second, be made convertible with felt pleasure. If happiness is to include virtue for other reasons than that virtue is a cause of pleasure, we must not resolve happiness into pleasure. But Mr

[1] *Util.* p. 52.

Mill tries to prove in the fourth chapter that the love of virtue for its own sake, *i.e.* not on account of pleasure anticipated from it, is not inconsistent with utilitarianism. In reality, if happiness is 'the desirable,' then the notion of it is vague and indefinite, of great importance indeed to the guidance of action, but what cannot by any means, of itself, furnish a practical principle for this. We have then only a philosophic utilitarianism, true and lofty in its way and sphere, but not fruitful, and wrong if brought out of its sphere. On the other hand if happiness is pleasure, then either virtue has nothing in it of itself desirable, or else it is simply a mode of pleasure. This latter is what has been hitherto understood as utilitarianism: Bentham's account of virtue is, 'Virtue is the sacrifice of a smaller to a greater interest—of a momentary to a permanent interest—of a doubtful to a certain interest. Every idea of virtue, which is not derived from this notion, is as obscure as the motive to it is precarious[1].' I need not explain how with Bentham the notion of interest depends on that of pleasure.

In order then for the *proof* which Mr Mill gives of utilitarianism to hold to any purpose at all, we must consider happiness in a very wide view, as being substantially coextensive with the desirable, or as meaning little more than the end of action in general. In this view, *all* action is *meant* to tend to happiness, *i.e.* is *meant rightly*, so far as Mr Mill's account of right and wrong goes here. The most cruel actions would not be done unless the doing of them was desired by the doer, unless, that is, they gave him, or were supposed by him likely to give him, happiness of this kind. And in the same way as *all* actions *aim* in this way at happiness, and

Indeed it is so vague that it ceases to supply any rule for life.

[1] *Pr. of Mor. and Leg.* ch. ii.

therefore are *meant rightly;* so in a complicated state of relations among acting beings, such as is the state of man on earth, it is probable that the great majority of actions do actually produce happiness of some kind to somebody, and therefore *are right:* it is an ill wind which blows nobody any good: one person's loss is constantly another's gain.

But if the felicific quality of an action is to determine its value, human happiness must be a definite thing ascertained from the study of human nature.

But when we speak of happiness as being the one thing valuable as an end of action, in such a way that we may consider the true comparative value of actions to reside in their being more or less what I have called *felicific*[1], it is evident that we must have a different idea of happiness from this, that anything which a man desires is (so far as it goes) his happiness. As soon as we begin to form the idea of happiness being what is valuable to a man, we must drop more or less the idea of its being merely that which pleases him. That is, we must take away from him that sort of simple immediate judgment which goes with the terms desire or pleasure: we must admit the notion of there being something which *ought* to be a man's happiness: we must consider his happiness, so to speak, as a function of his nature, as something which bears a fixed relation to other things which we may also take into our moral account, such for instance as his proper work or business, his natural manner of action, &c. Human happiness, to be valuable, must be a definite thing, which we must know (so far as we can know it) from knowledge of human nature.

Otherwise it is only in the absolute that conduciveness to enjoyment makes an

That actions tend to promote happiness, then, may be the thing, and the one thing, which makes them good or morally valuable, under the following circumstances: either absolutely (if Mr Mansel will allow the word), that is, if we consider things in a

[1] p. 67.

way abstracted from particular circumstance, as if we chose to consider what might influence God in creation; or in application to circumstance, if only we take proper account of all the circumstances, as, for instance, supposing it is human action and human happiness which we are speaking of, if we form our views upon that sort of study of the nature of man, which alone can enable us to know what properly is his happiness. Man's happiness bears a relation to a great many other things about him, just as they likewise bear a relation to it; and just also as in an organized being the foot is related to the head, and the manner of walking or of eating to both. And the absolute principle, (which may very likely be true,) that it is the more or less conduciveness to good in general, as matter of *enjoyment*, which makes that difference between actions which we call their being more or less good, as something to be *done*, must not be summarily imported into the midst of complicated human life, and applied to complicated human nature.

action morally good, and this absolute principle must not be summarily imported into complicated human life.

Something like what I have been saying here would probably be felt by most persons reading attentively the passages which I have quoted from Mr Mill, and would be expressed in various ways more simply than I have done it. They would say perhaps, Doubtless an action which tends to promote no happiness of anybody cannot be considered of any value, and therefore perhaps cannot be called *right*, and an action which tends to produce the reverse of happiness is, so far as this feature of it goes, wrong: but you do not mean to say that actions (such actions I mean as are done *concretely*, in this world of ours) are right in proportion as they tend to produce *any* happiness of *anybody:* we must surely be told *what sort of* happiness, and still more *whose* happiness, in order for this

We must know what kind of happiness and whose happiness is spoken of,

to be accepted as any description of right and wrong at all. For men have different interests: what is the loss of one, as I have said, is constantly another's gain.

before we can say that conduciveness to happiness moralizes human action.

To use still Mr Mill's language with which I first began: an action's being for happiness, rather than the reverse, may be considered to moralize it to a certain extent, and in the general or absolute view of action, in the manner which I have mentioned: but what is required more really to moralize it for human practice and for our moral philosophy is the consideration *what sort of* happiness and *whose* happiness we are speaking of. To make this at all a fit description of right and wrong, we must add here to the word 'happiness' various epithets: we must speak of real, true, proper happiness, to make certain we do not mean mere occasional pleasure: and we must speak of general or social happiness, to make certain we do not mean merely our own.

Mr Mill's 'moralization of action' is entirely alien to the Epicureanism, or old utilitarianism, which he professes to defend.

In explaining *the sort of* happiness which he means, Mr Mill, as we have seen, identifies[1] the utilitarianism which he professes with the old Epicureanism. The reader can hardly fail to remark, that the philosophy which specially belongs to him, and the utilitarianism which he professes and defends, will not really weld together. The idea of conduciveness to good or happiness giving to actions a character of what we may call rightness, or of being what should be done, an idea which in its sphere is both true and noble, is something entirely alien from and above both Epicureanism and much of the old utilitarianism. The Epicurean creed holds in regard to actions (saying nothing of right or wrong) that, if we are wise, we shall do them in proportion as they tend to promote our own happiness, and shall not do them in propor-

[1] See above, p. 16.

tion as they have the opposite tendency: and happiness it explains as definite pleasure. This theory need not be immoral or unphilanthropic, for Epicureans have always considered that they could prove that the aiding the happiness of others was a great means of aiding our own. But it is pleasure, and our own pleasure, that everything in it rests upon. Mr Mill, as I have said, does not till later explain whose happiness he is speaking of, in the formula[1] describing utilitarianism. This leaves room for a possible misapprehension. Mr Mill does not, as clearly as he might, convey to the reader that the Epicurean or quasi-Epicurean[2] doctrines which have been called worthy of swine and considered degrading to human nature have always prominently put forward our *own* pleasure in the first place, and have not been able, philosophically, to give us any other reason for our acting to the happiness of others, except that we may find it the best way to our own. The doctrine which has been called mean and grovelling has generally been not merely 'that life has had no higher end than pleasure,' but no higher end than 'our own' pleasure.

Indeed his professed defence is a virtual abandonment of Epicureanism.

But passing from this to what Mr Mill says about 'pleasure,' simply, (no matter whose) he seems to me rather what I should call struggling with his professed utilitarianism than defending it. I am not myself fond of positive language, nor indisposed to sympathize with qualified defence, but really I hardly see the use of defending Epicureanism or utilitarianism at all, when it has to be done with so many admissions and reservations as Mr Mill makes here. They follow one upon another, and there is a sort of oscillation in the 11th page which seems to leave the opponents of Epicureanism or utilitarianism in posses-

[1] Quoted p. 29. [2] See above, p. 19.

sion of almost the whole of their case. It appears that Epicureanism will not do without many Stoic and Christian elements: that utilitarian writers in general *have* not rightly conceived the superiority of mental pleasures to bodily: that they *might* with advantage have said something quite the opposite of that which they have said, and which Mr Mill now proceeds to say for them. No doubt it is wise to learn from enemies, and never too late to mend: but I should have thought, in the interests of moral science (and that is the main reason why I have written the present essay), that it would be better for the reformed utilitarianism to take a fresh start under a new name, or at least to drop the old.

I am afraid this chapter is not in all particulars clear. But the attempt to exhibit, as I have wished to do, the relation of Mr Mill's proof to that utilitarianism (so to call it) which almost all philosophers admit, and also to his own utilitarianism, is of necessity a proceeding difficult and complicated.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IV.[1]

The Utilitarianism which is common to all Moral Philosophy.

In what I have written, I have had in some respects the same object in view as Mr Mill in his papers which I have commented on. I do not wish to say anything against a real and worthy happiness-philosophy or eudæmonism (to use unsatisfactory words in default of better), and in so far as Mr Mill in any degree sketches such a philosophy as this, and tries to raise the old utilitarianism towards it, I sympathize with him. But in so far as he identifies himself with the particulars of the old utilitarianism, and would persuade us that here lies the moral road which experience and improved knowledge of philosophic method now point out to us, I differ from him in every possible way.

A utilitarianism which underlies all moral philosophy cannot be the same as the sectarian utilitarianism.

Mr Mill has remarked[2], that an assumption, more or less, of what he calls utilitarianism underlies all moral philosophy; he might have said, all thought about human action. He concludes from this that utilitarianism is the right philosophy; with equal reason it might have been concluded, that utilitarianism, so far as it is right, is not condemnatory of various other philosophies which Mr Mill's utilitarianism condemns, but readily associates and incorporates

[1] The following paragraphs may be regarded as a commentary on Mr Mill's words, 'If it be a true belief that God desires above all things the happiness of his creatures, and that this was his purpose in their creation, utility is not only not a godless doctrine, but more profoundly religious than any other.' *Util.* p. 30. In the Author's MS. they formed part of Ch. XII. on Moral Imperativeness. It appeared to me that they would be more appropriately introduced here as an Appendix to Ch. IV.—Ed.

[2] p. 5.

itself with them. Such right utilitarianism then must be very different from the utilitarian sectarianism, which it is the object of his papers to praise. Let us try and see what this right utilitarianism is.

The assumptions of this non-sectarian utilitarianism are (1) that all reasonable action is aimed at good, (2) that 'good' here means enjoyment.

The utilitarian assumption made by all moral philosophy is in two steps; the first, that all reasonable action is aimed at good, the next, that by *good* here must be meant, in one way or another, some being's enjoyment. Let us suppose all this, and let us even go further, and say that 'good', adjective, in application to moral beings, means desirous of 'good', substantive, or desirous to produce happiness, (carefully distinguishing *this*, as we must, from the desire of self-enjoyment, which no one could consider of itself goodness). Let us then imagine, in so far as we may be able to do so, the mind of the Creator of the world: either in the sort of way in which Plato in the Timæus[1] imagines how He, being Himself good, made the world in such and such a manner according to His goodness: or as the Bible speaks of God looking on what He had made, and behold, it was very good.

Granting these, we still have even in the most abstract view something originally valuable besides enjoyment, viz. the Creator's desire to produce enjoyment.

Even if we suppose goodness, in this abstract and primary view of it, to be determined entirely by reference to considerations of enjoyment, so that when it is said that what God had made is recognized by Him as good, it is meant that it is understood as adapted to the enjoyment of man or other sentient beings: even if we suppose this, we have already one thing originally valuable besides that enjoyment, namely, goodness in the Creator, or the desire on the part of the Creator to produce enjoyment. Had there not been in Him this goodness, there would have existed no happiness besides His own. How this is the case, may be seen by comparing the Epicurean utilitarianism, which is the basis of Paley's Moral Philosophy, with the notion of the independent goodness of God, which belongs to his Natural Theology. Were God to have had no other sort of goodness than that which Paley considers the only meaning of goodness or virtue as applicable to man, namely, the doing good for the sake of happiness (and that extraneous, not involved in the action) to result to the doer, it is hard to understand why anything should ever have been created, or why God should be called good rather than otherwise.

[1] Plato, *Tim.* p. 29.

If then we are to go back to the origin of things, if we are to suppose a Creator in original Almighty solitude, we must suppose also, in order for a world to arise, not only the possibility of happiness in possible sentient beings, but the existence of goodness in Him to make Him take pleasure in the production of such happiness. And surely, if the word *good*, adjective, has any meaning, this goodness itself was good, independent of any actual production of happiness, and before such happiness existed. It was something of itself morally valuable, worthy of admiration and of love, had beings existed for such feelings. If it was happiness only that was of this original value, we might well suppose God taking pleasure simply in his own happiness: but there was original value also in the disposition to produce happiness beyond the agent's own, and this God must have had in Himself, quite independently of His possessing, and simply valuing, happiness. And why, when we are deducing the genealogy of moral feeling, should we draw its descent from value for happiness alone, rather than from this independent and original goodness, in which we might suppose men might, at least in some small degree, resemble God? To return to Paley; why should we, like him, suppose an independent goodness in God, and yet be able to conceive nothing as even desirable for *man* except a merely selfish virtue, or a value for happiness unassociated with such independent goodness? And why such pains on the part of Mr Mill to make his philosophy take its foundation and its name from the fact about it that it preeminently values happiness, rather than from the equally important fact, (also belonging to it, as I am fully ready to acknowledge, in its *development* as distinguished from its professed principle) that, in a moral point of view, it is the general happiness or the happiness of others which it values, as distinguished from our own? Why must it be called *utilitarianism*, and deduce itself from Epicurus, rather than *philanthropy*, and deduce itself from the Gospel, and from such disposition as there is in man to go beyond his own pleasure?

A similar desire in men suggests a truer origin of moral feeling than their desire of their own enjoyment.

In bringing out that the idea of happiness is the source and origin of all reasonable movement and the key to explain it, Mr Mill does somewhat as Plato[1] does,

Mr Mill's idea of happiness as the source of

[1] *Rep.* VI. 505.

all reasonable action (like Plato's Idea of Good) cannot be educed from the mere desire of our own happiness.

when he says, that nothing else can throw true light upon the darkness of our ignorance as to the reality of things, except the idea of the good they are made for, the purpose they are to serve, the *use* of them, if so we like to call it. The action of the Creator would not have been reasonable, had it not been with a view to good and happiness. But Mr Mill's mistake consists in his failure to distinguish between that desire to produce happiness, (independently of thought of enjoyment for ourselves) which is goodness, and that simple tendency to, or desire of, our own enjoyment, which we must consider to be a character of sentience in general: or, which is much the same thing, he has considered without ground that the latter would of itself develope itself into the former. But if it *does* so develope itself, then there must be something which determines it this way rather than the other: and it is then this something which answers to what I have called goodness.

If we suppose then that the spring of all reasonable action is some happiness aimed at, moral philosophy begins when, passing beyond the principle of mere utilitarianism, we disengage the idea of *goodness*, that is, of the desire of *producing* happiness independent of that desire of *feeling* it which we cannot be without.

Even this idea of goodness, as I have said, goes beyond the *principle* of utilitarianism: but does it, of itself, give us the root of all morality? Let us see.

Besides the Creator's goodness we must recognise the Creator's justice. He not only seeks to produce happiness but to distribute that happiness according to certain laws.

As, if we imagine the Creator before anything was created, we are led to think, even in respect to Him, of something which *should be done* or an ideal of action, and call Him good on account of His disposition towards this; so still more, if we imagine Him after creation, we find the notion of this goodness enlarged, and new particulars added to it. For the conditions which it has pleased the Creator to give to His creation impose on Himself a moral law afterwards in reference to it. This is justice, as distinguished from simple goodness. It is the *regulation* of the desire to produce happiness, the *distribution*, as I have phrased it, of the action arising from this desire. As no action is reasonable, in the manner which we have seen, except such as is directed to a purpose, and the ultimate purpose of all action must be *some* enjoyment; so no action is reasonable,

in another manner, except such as is properly regulated and distributed, in every case where there are a variety of claims upon it or of sentient beings whom it may affect. This is law: in creating sentient beings, the Creator must be conceived as having created, in accordance with His own character, a moral law, to which He Himself is obedient as well as they, and in respect of which He is in society with them. Here then we have to go beyond considerations of utilitarianism, even the very highest, and to consider the independent valuableness, not only of happiness itself and of the goodness which aims at producing it, but of the justness and fairness which guides and regulates such aim.

Yet again, the Creator desires to produce, not happiness simply, but a worthy happiness like his own.

And yet there is another thing. Goodness and happiness, and these closely connected together, must be considered original characters of the Creator. And since the created world is made up of sentient beings of all kinds, some (of whom is man) imaginative and self-improvable, and with a strong desire of such improvement, must it not be a necessary part of the goodness of the Creator, that the happiness which it aims to produce should be a happiness like His own, of which goodness, or the disposition to promote the happiness of others, should be a portion? But here we come to that other consideration which, even in the very highest region of thought, must introduce itself along with utilitarianism; and we must say that the divine goodness is a desire not simply to produce happiness, but to produce a worthy and good happiness, a happiness, more or less, like that of the Creator Himself. Here then we plainly have, as I have said, something recognised as of value besides the happiness or enjoyment itself. What is it then that thus, distinct from duration and intensity of enjoyment, makes one sort of happiness more desirable, worthier, worth more, than another? It is possible that we cannot distinctly tell: we use various metaphors in speaking about it, most commonly such phrases as 'high' and 'low': we may conceive this scale as graduated by the more or less resemblance to what we may imagine the divine happiness, or as more or less rising above the happiness of the inferior animals, or in various other ways: it is a third dimension of happiness besides intensity and duration, and far the most important of the three. I have before remarked on Mr Mill's observations as to *quality* of happiness,

which phrase does, to a certain degree, recognise what I am now speaking of.

Utilitarianism is really based on the *a priori* assumptions we have considered, and has no claim to be called inductive.

I have endeavoured to consider here to what extent, and with what qualifications, the simply felicific feeling, or the desire to produce happiness, may be considered to represent all that we mean by goodness. It will be said that the region of abstract and imaginative speculation to which these discussions belong, is very different from that practical region in which utilitarianism delights to move. But in reality, what utilitarianism does in this respect is that which is done by the greater part of bad philosophy or, what is nearly the same thing, self-styled common sense. It assumes as self-evident, and as matter of common sense, a principle really belonging to the *a priori* region, forbidding however any entrance into this region to examine the principle, and giving out that it is not *a priori*, but belonging to experience. Meanwhile in its own region it has a certain degree of truth which commends it, and which is made, in default of further examination, to stand for complete truth. So it is in regard to the principle that all that is morally valuable is the production of happiness, and that all moral goodness is the desire to produce happiness: it is quite out of the region of experience, being very abstract and *a priori;* if its truth is to be tested at all, it must be in a region of abstract thought: experience may tell us what man desires, but no possible experience can tell us what goodness is, or as I have expressed it, what man *should do*. And yet utilitarianism, while quietly assuming the principle that man's goodness, what he should do, is simply the promotion of happiness, calls itself κατ' ἐξοχήν the morality of experience and induction, as though it were a principle provable and proved by experience. It brings what in its own region has a qualified truth into a region where it has none at all, and thus misleads entirely.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF ACTION FOR HAPPINESS.

It is the individual who feels and acts: it is he who seeks for the *summum bonum:* it is his *summum bonum* or ideal welfare which is sought for: it is he also who, as matter of fact, desires that which is pleasant, that namely which is pleasant to *him*. This, as an idea or notion, is not the same as the abstractly, or as the generally, desirable. We cannot practically speak about happiness without considering *whose* happiness it is we mean. The design of the present chapter is to examine the language of Mr Mill on this subject, to which some slight allusion has been made in the last chapter.

The term 'happiness' has no practical significance till we know whose happiness is meant.

I hope the reader has not forgotten the utilitarian formula which I quoted some time since from Mr Mill[1], viz. 'that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, and wrong as they do the reverse.' This to me immediately suggests the question, What sort of happiness? and still more, 'Whose happiness?' On this latter question I will speak now.

It is not distinctly stated at first, *whose* happiness is meant in the above formula. It occurs some time after, in p. 16: and that in such a manner as almost to make one think that, in the Epicurean reasonings

Mr Mill passes unawares from the 'happiness of the agent,'

[1] See above, p. 29.

to the 'happiness of all.'

which he had been giving, Mr Mill had himself been under the impression that his words naturally pointed to *our own* happiness. After mentioning something as, I suppose, in some sort a condition to the acceptance of the utilitarian standard, he goes on, 'but it is by no means an indispensable condition, for' (as we now hear for the first time) 'the utilitarian standard is not the agent's own greatest happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether.' This observation he repeats and developes in a passage so important, that though long, I must quote it[1]:

'I must again repeat, what the opponents of utilitarianism seldom have the justice to acknowledge, that the happiness which forms the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct, is not the agent's own happiness, but the happiness of all concerned. As between his own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires him to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested and benevolent spectator. In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility. To do as you would be done by, and to love your neighbour as yourself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality.'

But this alteration of the utilitarian formula does not obviate the charge of selfishness, for (1) there is nothing to authorize it, and (2) it is inconsistent with Mr Mill's own proof.

Now here it really seems to me hard upon the opponents of utilitarianism that they are blamed for unfairness in not acknowledging a thing which only turns up in the indirect manner in which we have seen it does in Mr Mill, a thing moreover which scarcely seems to suggest itself from the utilitarian formula immediately to himself. No doubt if assailants have charged utilitarianism with exhibiting selfishness as the rule of conduct in which its teaching finally results, it is so far a calumny. But in reality scarcely any system of morality has ever had this charge made against it. Rather it has been made

[1] p. 24.

a charge against all systems of morality that the precepts of life in which their different teachings result are the same, from which it has been concluded by some that the previous difference of opinion and controversy about the principles and system must have been useless and idle. In all systems of morality alike, what is put forward as right and commendable is some form of public spirit as against selfishness. When a system is called selfish, what is meant is that the foundation of it is laid on a supposition of selfishness, in such a manner that, in the opinion of those who disapprove it, the public spirit which is taught as the conclusion does not properly follow from the selfishness which is supposed as the premiss. And Mr Mill must also remember that, in his proof of utilitarianism, he does not at all prove it in the sense and to the extent which he would here give to it. For happiness *there* is considered as identical with 'the desirable,' and this, however when *moralized* (in Mr Mill's language) it may include whatever is desired by all or any, is of course, in the first instance and as natural, simply what is desired by the person desiring, that is, by ourselves. But Mr Mill here throws off from utilitarianism its Epicurean garb, with blame to its adversaries again (we saw another instance of such blame before) for even supposing it had one. Let us see what he gives us instead.

The plurality of claims demands some principle to regulate the distribution of action for happiness.

I have said that an action which can be shown to be productive of no happiness to anybody, if such an action is possible, is wasted, and therefore wrong: and under certain circumstances, actions productive of *more* happiness (speaking abstractly of happiness without consideration whose it is) are of more moral value, that is, are better, than those which are productive of less happiness. But it is only thus far that the prin-

ciple, which utilitarianism would make the sole one, is in respect to human action of moral importance. For to say that for human estimation an action is the better simply the *more* happiness it produces (supposing the phrase can be used with any significance,) will not do. Our actions concern individuals (including ourselves) bearing all sorts of relations with each other and with different and contending interests. We have got to consider therefore not only the direction of our action to the production of happiness, but the distribution of our action among the different happinesses or susceptibilities of pleasure towards which it may be directed. And this distribution has always practically been felt as the pressing question of morals. The most important point in regard of this distribution is the question as between our own happiness and that of others, the question between selfishness and benevolence: the next in importance is the question of special claim upon us, or the question between justice and both benevolence and selfishness. The philosophical character of utilitarianism, as Mr Mill puts it, may be considered an attempt to shift the question from this ground back to the ground of the production of more or less of happiness. It tries to blind its eyes to the fact that it must assume *some* principle of distribution for the happiness, and when it does assume such, it seems to avoid as much as possible giving a reason for it.

Utilitarian principle of distribution.

The principle of the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number' involves no such idea of distribution. Supposing, as is undoubtedly the fact, that we are not aware, each of us, of any distinct limit to our capacity for happiness, (if only there is more happiness for us to enjoy); I do not see why a person should not be acting on this principle who acted entirely for his own happiness, with the *bonâ fide* idea

that as he *could* do more for his own happiness than for that of others, he was really in this way most increasing the entire stock. For the utilitarian rule of distribution Mr Mill cites further on in his Essay, a saying of Bentham[1], and in the passage I have quoted he himself gives the principle: it is, that all persons (I suppose) are to be considered to have equal claim on the action of each, the agent's self included with the rest. I say, 'I suppose,' because I do not exactly know what Mr Mill means by 'all persons *concerned*.'

It is inconsistent with other doctrines of Mr Mill, (as that of sympathy);

The manner in which Mr Mill deals with this question of the distribution of action is one of which we have already seen examples. Beginning with the principles which have been commonly known under the name of utilitarianism, he then proceeds to answer objections which have been made to these principles, by saying that utilitarianism teaches, or might have taught, doctrines quite contradictory to them. As I have said, it appears to me that the contradictory doctrines rather than the utilitarian principles are given with the most appearance of his own mind going with them, so that (in spite of their form and purpose) I regard these papers as a most valuable aid to what I believe to be the true views as to the foundations of morality. Thus many of the doctrines which I have to set against the utilitarian principles are to be found in the papers themselves, and it is no objection to what I am now doing to say that Mr Mill has himself said the same. As an instance, in spite of the above-mentioned assumed principle of the arithmetical distribution of action for happiness, he has given elsewhere (when he is not defending utilitarianism), particularly in

[1] p. 91, 'everybody to count for one, nobody for more than one.'

the beautiful passage to which I have already referred about sympathy and society, the real principle of the proper distribution of action in this respect. Sympathy[1], he tells us there, makes another the object with us of the same feelings which we have in regard of ourselves, desire, for instance, of happiness: and sympathy follows fact or, if we prefer expressing it so, answers to relation; that is, those we sympathize with are those who are brought into contact with us, or about whom we come to have knowledge, and whose circumstances or relation to us call for feeling on our part: and so the desire of happiness which begins of necessity with ourselves, (for all desire must in the first instance be individual,) is propagated, as to its object, around us, until it at last embraces the whole human race, or as I most heartily agree with Mr Mill, the whole sentient creation[2]. All this is almost moral common-place: but it is common-place most unworthily exchanged, in the utilitarian scheme, for the doctrine that the object of our desire and action for happiness, should be the whole creation divided into so many units, one of which is ourselves, and each of which is to be looked on by us as of equal importance.

and unmeaning in regard to practice, since the comparison supposed is in fact impossible.

For practical application, it is evident that this latter doctrine has no meaning, and is only so many words; since (to take the most important point as to the question,) our own happiness which is imagined by us immediately, and the happiness of others, which is imagined by us through sympathy, must be looked on in a different manner, and cannot possibly be brought into comparison in the way of measurement, one with the other: not to mention the superinduced consideration, that our acting for the

[1] pp. 45 49. [2] p. 17.

happiness of others is one of the means of augmenting our own. The desire of the happiness of others, when excited by sympathy, may very possibly be greater than any desire consciously felt for our own: but greater or less, the feeling is different. How much of somebody else's pleasure, which a man imagines by sympathy, weighs so much of his own pleasure, which he feels, is a sort of comparison in regard of which we can only say, that if a man felt disposed to calculate in this way, he would probably never get beyond his own pleasure. We may know men selfish, and men very much the reverse; but a person acting upon this idea of impartiality, I think, would be hard to find. And then as to applying our test: action is wrong, by Mr Mill's first principle, if it does not tend to produce happiness; it is wrong again by this second principle, if, in doing it, we are doing more for the sake of our own happiness than we do for the happiness of each other person with whom we are brought into contact. But how can people help, in this present world of ours, acting more for their own happiness, that is, concerning themselves more specially with their own health, fortune, and good reputation, than they do with that of each of those whom they know? Though here again the difficulty recurs: for in respect of others, no one ever thought of taking care that he divided his action for happiness equally amongst all those whose happiness he could in any way promote. These things are not matters for arithmetic.

Difference between it and the Christian maxim with which it is compared by Mr Mill.

Mr Mill quotes with reason the words of our Lord, which are 'the ideal perfection' of all morality, as being that of utilitarian morality among the rest; and Christianity does indeed contain in itself all that is good in utilitarianism. But the Christian idea of all men being brethren or neighbours, (the

very expression carrying with it the notion of that spreading outwards which I have described, of the expansion of a family or society rather than of the division of an aggregate) seems to me at the farthest remove possible from Mr Mill's idea of men being, as objects for the action of each one of them, equal units, duty consisting in impartiality among them. However much the action of Christianity, in tending to widen the moral view and the feeling of brotherhood, tends to bring these ideas in certain respects nearer each other, it leaves them always as much two distinct ideas with distinct properties, as the asymptote is distinct from the curve towards which it ever tends but which it never meets. Christianity widens the area of brotherhood because it is ever generative of fresh sympathy and philanthropy, not because it has any tendency to equalize sympathies, or to weaken existing ones by dispersing them abroad. The words of our Lord, so far as they have any bearing upon the difference of view which I am speaking of, seem to me to carry with them the exact opposite of that which Mr Mill concludes from them. To suppose, as Mr Mill apparently does, that the terms of the proposition may be transposed, making it our duty to love ourselves as our neighbour, no less than it is our duty to love our neighbour as ourselves, is a construction which I think has never hitherto been put upon them. The notion which they give us is that the love of ourselves, or the wishing to be 'done by' in a certain manner, is something which is sure to be in us, and they urge that something else *not* sure to be in us should if possible be so to the same extent. Nobody I think ever understood them as expressing a measure of exact equality or a limit, but rather a standard to be aimed at.

Reasons which led utilitarians to adopt equality as the principle of distribution.

The principle of philosophical utilitarianism which has some value and is important, (viz. that an action is lost or worthless which does not promote *some* happiness, and worse than that if it simply diminishes happiness,) gives us, as I have said, no principle of distribution of our action for happiness, but of itself would leave it to be supposed that it was of no consequence *whose* happiness was promoted. This however will not make a moral system: there must be some hypothesis as to the distribution: and I suppose that the charm of equality of distribution to utilitarianism is that in certain respects it stands nearest to the former supposition; I mean that we might take it to signify that it was not of *special* consequence whose happiness was promoted; in other words, that the reason why the happiness of all should be promoted alike was, that there was no reason why the happiness of one should be promoted more than that of another. In the view of some, probably, this principle of distribution derives an additional charm from the apparent association with the political idea of equality: but utilitarians have not I think *necessarily* been men of political views of this kind. Doubtless also the idea of justice and of reason adds a strong support to the proposed principle on the ground of its seeming impartiality and disinterestedness.

Its profession of impartiality examined.

One important view of morality which has entered into very opposite systems, is that which regards it as effecting a revolution in our natural judgment of actions, similar to that which took place in astronomical thought when the Copernican system was substituted for the Ptolemaic. Morality in this view bids us change our standing-point from ourselves, cease to be self-centred, and to refer everything to our own happiness, and calls us to put our standing-point

as it were in the centre of the universe, and to make ourselves, as thought of, be no more to ourselves, as thinking, than anybody else is. Just as, intellectually, reason binds men together, and if we may so speak, deindividualizes them, truth being common, or what so far assimilates one mind to another, while error is individual: so morally, the growth of virtue is a gradual deindividualization of men as to the purpose of their action also, substituting common purposes for private ones, and carrying sympathy to such an extent that individual interests will really vanish. Reason is the same for all, and the application of the principle of reason to morality abolishes the notion of self. One manner also of the action of religion has always been in this direction: we are taught to look at things as God sees them, and to love men as He loves them. But all this must begin with the notion of ourselves, and of something, whatever it is, which makes *us* what *we* are, and with the notion of others as differing among themselves, and with certain things which make *them* what *they* are: when our point of view is changed these views are altered, but still the first are the groundwork of those which are formed afterwards. Impartiality and disinterestedness are negative terms, which have no meaning except on the supposition of temptation to partiality and of possible interestedness in the first instance: they are guards and corrections and cannot be given to us as original principles. They can only mean acting as between two parties according to the relations which *ought* to guide action: not necessarily the giving *no* preference, but the giving no *undue* preference: and we have still then the meaning of 'ought' and 'due' to settle. Because a judge is impartial, it does not follow that he will divide the thing in dispute equally between the parties. Im-

partiality between two parties means, the not allowing any considerations to contribute to the judgment formed which ought not to do so.

The real principle of distribution of action, both as between ourselves and our neighbours, and as between the claims of different neighbours, is given (partly) by the idea of Duty.

The two great moral questions, the one, as between ourselves and others, the other, as between those to whom we are bound in any way and those to whom we are not bound, cannot be settled by any anticipatory determination to make no preferences. It looks of course well to say, in Mr Mill's version of our Lord's words, 'Love yourself and your neighbour alike:' but it does *not* look well to say, 'Love your father and your neighbour, your benefactor and your neighbour, alike;' yet this is in fact what the principle of 'every body counting for one' leads to. There are circumstances, I presume, in which we are to deal with our benefactor the same as with anybody else, and circumstances in which we are not: and if we are to have utilitarian morality as a science to deal with our *incitements* to action, we certainly want besides it a good morality of justice and duty to deal with these circumstances. For utilitarianism here, it appears, can only put us off with the very inapplicable doctrine of 'no preferences:' and this adopted not from any principle in utilitarianism itself, but because something must be adopted, and this seems least to commit utilitarianism to any principles dangerous to it.

Society is not so much an aggregation of similar units, as an organization of dissimilar members: and our duty is not to promote the happiness of all

In some respects, society, whether moral or political, may be considered an aggregation of similar units; but in far more important respects it is an organization of dissimilar members. The general happiness, as a fact, is the sum of the happiness of the individuals; but as an object to be aimed at, it is not this, but it is to be attained by the acting of each according to the relations in which he is placed in the society. It is these different relations,

alike, but the happiness of each according to the moral relation in which we stand to him.

rendering as they do the individuals *dissimilar* in circumstances, which more truly convert mere juxtaposition into society than anything of similarity does. This latter is needed in certain most important respects, not indeed in any form of equality, but in the form of common understanding and sympathy: but the various need and the power of mutual benefit which *dissimilarity* of circumstance produces are as vital to the society as the other points, and do more to make it necessary and fruitful. By moral relations and moral society, as distinguished from political, I understand men as stronger and weaker, benefactors and benefited, trusters and trusted, or linked together in other moral relations similar to these, besides the natural relations, as of family, which partially coincide with these; lastly, supposing there is no other relation, as linked together in any case by the general relation of human brotherhood. And if we are to answer the question, *whose* happiness are we to promote? we must answer it by saying, not the happiness of all alike, ourselves taking share with the rest, but the happiness (if we are so to describe it) of each one with whom we have to do, according to the moral relation in which we stand to him. The happiness which we are to promote is that of those who are benefitable by us, who want something of us, or have claim upon us, *according* to their wants and claims. The satisfaction of such want and claim is the *doing our duty*.

The intellectual perception of duty, and the feeling which accompanies it, have reference in the first

And duty binds us, not first in the general (namely, to promote the general happiness), and in the particular only as a consequence of this; but first in the particular, duty in general being an expression for the whole of such particular duty. The particularity of duty and its felt stringency or

urgency go together.' Failure in duty is an injury to the person towards whom we fail, and it is this, not the diminution of the happiness of society or of happiness in general, which makes the point of the wrongness of it.

instance to the particular, and not to the general.

Speaking generally, sympathy follows duty, it being a part of the right working of human nature that feeling follows fact. Feeling, as for instance sympathy, involves in it constantly a great mass of indistinct but true perception: it is what we may call undeveloped thought, and in cases (most abundant) where the fixing and expression of thought is difficult and slippery, feeling is a guide which often indicates fact and duty when thought and reason may be able but very imperfectly to exhibit them. The feeling which accompanies the intellectual perception of particular moral duty is often of the intensest character. The idea of not failing to repay obligation and benefit, the idea of answering trust in us by truthfulness and faithfulness on our part, these and similar ideas are accompanied constantly by feeling, the intenseness of which arises entirely from the felt particularity of the relation: any mixture of this feeling with the other feeling, good enough in itself, that we ought to speak the truth because it is of vast importance to society that people's word should be believed, would, so far as it had any effect, weaken the former. Thus it is that, in a right state of things, feeling which arises of itself, and reason, which makes us aware of moral fact (as of relation and of duty), work together.

The utilitarian maxim amended so as to include the notion of duty.

And the utilitarian maxim, that 'an action is right in proportion as it tends to promote happiness,' is incomplete without having appended to it such an addition as this, 'and not merely happiness in general, but such happiness in particular as the agent is

specially bound and called upon to promote,' the terms 'bound' and 'called upon' being explained by the ideas of duty and sympathy in the manner which I have just described. It is so that the question, '*Whose* happiness?' is to be answered.

But besides the idea of duty, we need also the idea of Virtue, to determine the distribution of our action.

The idea of duty, however, and the feelings which correspond to it, do not perfectly answer the most important question in regard of the distribution of our action for happiness, namely, the question between ourselves and others in general: nor can this be done without the taking account of another moral idea, which we may call that of *Virtue*.

Virtue, a development of the natural feeling of sympathy, enables us to rise above the temptation to act solely for our own happiness.

Comparing together, in the way of measurement, so much of our own happiness with so much of the happiness of others, seems to me, as I have said, a chimerical idea. People's own happiness being the starting-point, as Mr Mill's proof of utilitarianism is sufficient to show us, they will never act for the happiness of others at all, never get out of the idea of looking only at their own, except either by the properly Epicurean consideration that through the happiness of others is one way to their own (if that can really be called getting out of the idea of their own happiness), or by the natural feeling of sympathy developing itself into the temper of mind which, under certain circumstances, we call virtue, under certain others we call generosity, or by some term similar. The utilitarian half assumption (I call it *half* assumption, because the language of utilitarians about it seems sometimes studiously confused) is that the desire of happiness in *general*, the charmingness of the idea, independent of the thought of the enjoyment of it, is the starting-point, and then from this we proceed, for enjoyment, to assign so much to ourselves, so much to others. On this scheme one forms but little idea that there exists constantly an over-

whelming temptation to appropriate it all to ourselves: but we are aware that there is such temptation, that this is the condition of human nature, and that it is the chief work of virtue to stand against it.

It is a moral overflow of our nature beyond what strict duty requires.

As to the comparative measure, then, of action for our own happiness and action for the happiness of others, we at once see that nothing like a rule can be given. The very idea of virtue (or say philanthropy), the very mention of the word, implies a supposition of acting for the happiness of others, which mere supposition is so much more than we need make (and the acting in this manner so much more than we need do), if we rest in the supposition with which we start, that the simply desirable (which necessarily in the first instance must mean the desirable to ourselves, and that which we ourselves do desire), is what we are to direct our action to. Virtue may be proved to be our own best happiness, and virtue may be proved to be our duty in such a manner that we shall be punished if we do not possess it: but whatever may be proved as to these accessory characters of virtue, virtue itself is a moral overflow of our nature, a spontaneous outgoing of it beyond what moral necessity, if we may so speak, prompts; a free moral resolution to apply the extended reason and view, by which we differ from the lower animals, not to the purposes of our own particular existence alone, as *they* in the main are obliged to do, but to the benefit and happiness of others. It is just because, as many would tell us, no man can be *required* to act otherwise than for his own happiness, that it is virtue to do so. And to speak of rules and measures of anything which has this origin seems absurd. The frame of mind which would lead to the consideration how far it ought to go, would, one would think, have precluded the existence of it at all. It very often indeed,

when existing, goes but a little way, being daunted by fear, or drawn back by self-indulgence, or hemmed in by self-interestedness, or stopped in whatever way: in such cases the supposition of an advising and disinterested spectator might be of some advantage: but it constantly also goes *beyond* what any such spectator would advise or venture to recommend as what could be called barely *right:* under the form of generosity, it leads to self-sacrifice, to risk on behalf of others, to unhesitating preference of them, to the ten thousand forms of noble action. Here we can have no idea of action right by measurement: but only of action good and worthy through the purpose, the principle, and the motive.

The utilitarian principle of distribution checks selfishness by the thought of the disproportion between the happiness of one and that of all: the true principle is that which appeals to our consciousness of freedom and of sympathy.

The utilitarian way then of putting the question as between ourselves and others, which depends on the idea of quantity of happiness, and which may be expressed thus, "Do not act for so mean an object as the happiness of one, though that one be yourself, when you might act for the much higher and better object of the happiness of many," is not the proper view, because if we apply this principle, the *one* in question may not be oneself, but may be one to whom much of our services and of our life would be rightly devoted, and the view would condemn such devotion as that. We might be willing that we ourselves should count but for one in our action, but should not be willing that each one of those dear to us should count for no more. The principle to settle the question between ourselves and others must rather be, "Do not engross all your action for happiness to yourself: the more you can spare for others, the more you truly *do* something: the promotion of your own happiness is a matter of no *moral* account at all, except so far as it may subserve further purposes: to the extent to which it engrosses you, you

are acting on no moral consideration, but on principles purely *natural*, as natural is opposed to human, moral, reasonable. The reason why this is wrong, so far as it is wrong, is not because in your action you are failing to promote happiness, for (by the supposition) you are promoting your own; and if we look upon happiness merely as happiness, it is quite conceivable, (though in practice you probably would not find it the fact) that you might be more successful in promoting your own happiness than in your attempts to promote that of others. But the reason why it is wrong is because action natural *in this manner* is not the action proper for you, and so far as you fail to feel that it is not, you feel on the other hand that you are not what you should be. You are conscious: you are free: you see what wants doing, and you feel yourself more or less able to do it: you are not bound, like the animals, to the care of *your own* existence, by restriction of consciousness and consequent want of freedom: you can enter into the wants of others and their capacity for enjoyment as well as your own: you have impulse to action and power for it: and you *must* surely feel yourself more a man, feel that you *live* more, in proportion as you can spread your action beyond your own benefit to embrace theirs. And then there is special sympathy to meet special claim: and nature provides warm feeling and affection to set all in movement."

Sympathy alone can harmonize action for our own happiness and for that of others.

It is this sympathy which brings the happiness of ourselves and of others, as the double object of our action, into harmony together, so that the occasion does not arise for the balancing one against the other, in order to take equal measures of each. And thus it is most thoroughly the case that the acting for the happiness of others is generally the best way to a man's own happiness, while yet this proposition will

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not bear stating in the manner in which it must be stated in order to build morality upon Epicureanism, or philanthropy upon selfishness. For if the ultimate purpose of our consulting the happiness of others is the subserving thereby our own, the fact that this is so shows that there is not in us that free and virtuous disposition to philanthropy, which arises from sympathy, and which is necessary in order that the making of others happy shall really make ourselves so.

The simple increasing of our own happiness is neither right nor wrong.

So far therefore as there is meaning and truth in the maxim, that an action is right in proportion as it tends to promote happiness, and wrong as it is the reverse, if the question arises, Whose happiness? we may put ourselves out of the consideration: there is no rightness in consulting our own happiness, or wrongness in doing the reverse. Under certain circumstances there is a rightness in *diminishing* our own happiness, and a wrongness in increasing it: but the simple increasing of it is of itself neither right nor wrong.

Utilitarianism, while it accuses asceticism of tending to diminish happiness, itself tends to discourage self-sacrifice.

Between utilitarianism and the cognate ideas on the one side, and asceticism and its cognate ideas on the other, there has been, it seems to me, a good deal of blind argument, which Mr Mill touches on in these papers[1], without I think doing much to enlighten it. Asceticism may be under certain circumstances, a commanded religious duty, and if it is, it is so far out of our present consideration. But otherwise, the philosophical principle of utilitarianism must be considered to hold true to this extent, that there is no rightness or moral value in the diminishing our own happiness, except so far as the diminution is of the nature of a sacrifice, that is, is for a purpose, that purpose being the increase of the happiness of some one, or the nourishment of the dispo-

[1] p. 23.

sition, and the formation of the character, which shall lead to such happiness: in any other case diminution of happiness is simply so much of what is valuable lost to no purpose. This being so, utilitarianism accuses asceticism, self-sacrifice, and their kindred ideas, of taking pleasure in pain as pain: there is no harm in its attacking them for this, except so far as it may be fighting a shadow. But it also goes far towards denying value to self-sacrifice which has not an actual result of *some* happiness to show as proceeding from it. Its tendency to this arises from its pushing too far its principle, that nothing but resulting happiness gives value to actions, and from its deducing too exclusively (in a manner which we shall see presently) the merit and praiseworthiness of virtue from our association of the idea of it with that of the happiness which it is its nature to promote. The consequence is that utilitarianism has had to a certain degree the reputation, and not quite undeservedly, of not laying the foundation of virtue deep enough, so that while it very nobly teaches desire for the happiness of others, it does not, so far as its principle goes, sufficiently encourage that readiness to forego our own happiness (finding it indeed probably afterwards when not expected) which effective devotion to philanthropy often requires. As it is, quite as important practical results, in regard of the happiness of others, have been produced by asceticism as by utilitarianism. Bentham thought, and with reason, that if men could once be got distinctly to have the idea that happiness, well examined and systematized happiness, and that not the agent's own only, was the one thing worthy of being acted for, great results in the way of philanthropy would ensue. No doubt they would, and have. But results as great in philanthropic success have proceeded in an abundance of

In reality asceticism, by its encouragement of disregard for private happiness in comparison of the attainment of a worthy object, has been the cause of as great philanthropic results as utilitarian-

ism by its methodization of the general happiness.

noble ascetics from the encouragement of the idea that happiness was a thing, in regard of which the best that could be done was to sacrifice it and change it for the attainment of a worthy object*. In the worthy object the two systems were agreed: but no greater results have flowed (or I think will flow) from the theoretical methodization and exclusive magnification of the object, which utilitarianism teaches, than from the encouragement of the feelings, as to self, necessary for the attainment of it, which wise asceticism has effected.

* It might be a practical inconsistency in a man like St Vincent de Paul that he should live a life of asceticism himself, as if self-denial were the proper end of human conduct, and yet that every moment of his life should be spent, not in making others ascetic and pleasing himself with their hardships, but in labouring for their relief and pleasure, as if the rule of life were enjoyment: but it is an inconsistency to which much of human conduct is most happily liable. If a man's life is to be spent in the service of his fellow-creatures, in promoting a material happiness for them, he must not have the idea that a material happiness is what he wants for himself; he must find his own happiness in the success of his labours, and in the sight of *their* happiness; where indeed he will find it most abundantly and in a form far more real and intense than any material happiness could be: so that philanthropy *is* the best self-love, always under the all-important consideration, which renders vain a good deal which philosophers have said upon this subject, that it is not from such policy, and with a view to the happiness of self, that it is practised.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE REAL GOODNESS OF VIRTUE.

We have already entered to some degree upon the consideration of those other elements of moral value which have to be taken into account, in the estimation of actions, along with conduciveness to happiness, the chief (whether they are, or are not the only ones) being 'duty' and 'virtue.' I now proceed to examine them more fully: and it will be my business in this chapter to show especially in regard of *virtue*, that its goodness or valuableness is not given to it simply by its conduciveness to happiness, but has other sources independent of this: I shall try to show what those sources are.

Utilitarianism allows no goodness to virtue except that which springs from its tendency to produce happiness.

Mr Mill's own utilitarianism may be considered to consist (independent of certain applications in practice, which I will not speak of now) in giving an utilitarian basis, in the way of philosophy or theory, to an edifice which itself is mixedly Epicurean, Stoic, emotional, societarian, and I know not how much besides: the more it is besides, so much the better for it in my view. What I mean by the furnishing it with a philosophic basis of utilitarianism is simply this: the supposing that, whatever praiseworthiness and excellence there may be in virtue, whatever bindingness in duty, whatever indispensableness in

society, whatever nobleness in self-devotion, whatever delightfulness in sympathy; all this depends in the last resort upon the maxim, that one action is better or more valuable than another, more to be chosen than another, preferable to another, on this principle only, that it is more conducive to some happiness. *Some* here must be taken generally, without consideration *whose* or *what* happiness, and nothing else must be taken account of about the action except this conduciveness.

The foundation is not generally a part of the building which we see, and it is quite possible that a system resting upon this as its basis might give us very exalted ideas, and that perfectly *bona fide*, in regard either of virtue or of any moral idea, however alien from utilitarianism it may at first appear. I shall try however to show that, though it may possibly give us exalted ideas in this respect, it cannot give us right ones: and in so doing I shall have occasion to touch on one or two other objections, which Mr Mill supposes made against utilitarianism, besides those which have been already noticed.

But even granting that in the absolute the idea of happiness is prior to that of virtue or duty, being coeval with sentience;

The two next moral ideas, or perhaps we should more correctly say classes of ideas, besides the idea of happiness or good and ideas cognate to it, are the idea of virtue or virtuousness with those of generosity and others similar, and the idea of duty with justice and others similar to that. And the principle of the philosophical utilitarianism is in fact the simply saying that these two latter depend upon that of good or happiness. This I do not think is so. I allow that happiness (meaning by that not human *εὐδαιμονία*, but good, the absolute *ἀγαθόν* or desirable) is the more general idea of the three, and comes earlier in what we may call the abstract scale of thought: it arises coevally and correspondently with

the idea of *sentience* (I use this word as the most general form of sensibility, sensitiveness, or whatever we may call it); and a world in which there was nobody or nothing which could feel anything, if it is to be called a world of existence at all, is one which we need not trouble ourselves about. And of course this good or happiness, in the last resort, is not good or happiness, unless it is felt and enjoyed. As I have said before, if we are speaking on the supposition, not of *a state of things* of any kind, for it is not yet that, but of an anteriorness to any fixed conditions of anything, in the rarefied atmosphere of that which some call the absolute, if for example we were thinking why God should ever have created anything at all, we may possibly need no other consideration than that of the increase of happiness.

still in the nature of man activity is no less original a fact than sentience; and human action has its value as action, independent of any conduciveness to enjoyment.

But as soon as the happiness itself, leaving this absolute generalness, begins to take any conditioned form, and to be the happiness of any supposably actual being, other ideas rise up equally important, which are concerned with it, but by no means dependent on it. That men, for instance, are *active* beings is quite as original a fact of their nature as that they are sentient: we are not entitled to say, that the prime and original fact of man's nature is his sentience or capability of happiness, and that his activity, or his being able to work for this or any other purpose, is of the nature of an accident as compared with this, is something supervening which he might very possibly have been without: we may only say this as we might say the reverse, that man is essentially an active being, and that his capacity for happiness is something accidental. Man is by nature *active,* as well as active *to an end;* his action has a character of its own, independent of its reference to an end: and therefore, though it must have an end

in order to be reasonable, and our object must be to find the proper end for it, it is not necessary that it should have no value other than what is given it by this end. The supposition that the idea of goodness or valuableness is absorbed in the end is in fact the supposition that action, considered in itself and independently of the end, is an evil: that the universe would have been better if there had been no action in it, nothing but (if we can conceive it) enjoyment. The positive value of enjoyment as against the negative value of non-existence or of unconscious freedom from pain is what we have no means of weighing: but considering that in any conceivable world it is probable that enjoyment must be mixed with something of *action*, that is, (by the supposition) of *evil*, the most probable result of the supposition seems to be a sort of nihilism, or an idea that it would have been better that nothing had ever been.

If this value be described as enjoyment involved in action, then the value of action does not depend on the end,

But it is clear that action is a part of nature as much as enjoyment is, and that it has *its* value as action besides whatever value conduciveness to enjoyment may give it. We may express this if we like it by saying that there is enjoyment in the action itself: but if we do, we must give up the idea of the character or value of actions being measured only by the end. If the action *itself* may be enjoyment as action, there is an end of the maxim that actions are only valuable, or distinguishable from each other with a view to choice, according to their *conduciveness* to enjoyment.

and the idea of happiness becomes entangled with many other considerations which would pre-

The importance of this necessary consideration about action is of a double kind. In the more outward region of *application*, it renders the value of the felicific character of actions (or their productiveness of happiness), as a test of any kind, much less than would at first be considered likely, or than Bentham,

in the ardour of a supposed discoverer, reckoned it would be. It makes it impossible to disentangle happiness out of the complicated web of considerations which make up our knowledge of human nature, to any extent which should render our action for happiness a simple and ready thing. It renders conscious and deliberate action towards (what we may think) such happiness less important as compared with some other ways of action, because we may be really more promoting it in these other ways. vent its being of practical use.

But it is more particularly with utilitarianism as making the idea of conduciveness to happiness a fundamental principle that I am now concerned, rather than as it might make this idea a practical rule. And here the importance of the considerations which I have mentioned is still greater.

There is a tendency to action in men as well as a capacity for happiness: and hence the moral question may present itself in the form, How am I to direct my action? as well as in the form, How am I to gain happiness? Not only the meeting the capacity for happiness, but the manner of meeting it, is a matter of moral consideration. The universe is not merely an agency for producing the happiness of its occupants: there is a meaning and a value in life besides what is given by happiness. The phrase 'living well,' as used to express what is desirable about life, carries with it the notion 'as man should live,' that is, not only feeling what he would wish to feel, but doing what it belongs to him to do. We may say then, if we like so to use our language, that goodness is desirable for man, as well as happiness. It will be answered, that this is only making goodness a part of happiness, because happiness is coextensive in meaning with the desirable. This is so: but happiness *thus* understood is no longer simply conscious enjoyment, but must The activity of man also suggests new forms of the moral question: goodness is a mark of right action as much as happiness.

mean a state of which conscious enjoyment is only one of the characters. And of such a state any other constant character may be taken as a distinctive mark, as well as enjoyment. Right action then (that is, action conducive to happiness in the wide sense) will be known just as much by its being conducive to human goodness, as by its being conducive to human happiness in the narrow sense. And as the idea that happiness might very possibly be involved in action, demands the addition of a new clause to the utilitarian formula to the effect that action is right (not only as conducive to happiness, but also) in so far as it *is itself* happiness, so must we conclude still again that action is right both as it is conducive to goodness, and also as it is in itself goodness or good.

Action may be considered in its principles independently of its ends: we then have a partial philosophy such as Aristotle's, which treats exclusively of the worth of the agent, just as MrMill's of the morality of the act.

Human action may be considered in the manner of it, and in the principles of it, by itself, independent of any consideration of what end it may or should serve: we may, in imagination, suppose the great end of the general happiness non-existent, or impossible: our consideration would then be unsatisfactory, no doubt: it would be wanting in truthfulness to human nature, it would very likely be in itself mistaken, and it would very certainly be mistaken so far as we assumed it to be all that was wanting for morality. But it would not be all this more than utilitarianism is on its side. It would only, like utilitarianism, be taking one single character of right actions for the solitary, essential, and constituent one. What I am describing here is pretty much what Aristotle, the great master of these things, has done. He has treated of right action, if right is what we call it, without any reference at all to its being action for the general happiness, just as Mr Mill treats it without any reference to its being anything else. The consequence is that we have two moral philoso-

phies apparently antagonistic, but really quite wide of each other, and treating of different subjects, as if there were two human natures. Mr Mill[1] speaks of the worth of the agent (a different thing quite, he considers, from the morality of the action), almost with a sort of contempt as if it were something with which moral philosophy had nothing to do. In Aristotle moral philosophy has to do with little else.

Moral value of virtue derived from man's free-will and aspiringness.

Upon the whole, it may perhaps be considered that there are two chief sources from which a virtuous action derives its moral value independently of its consequences: one of these is connected with the freewill of man, the other with his aspiringness or upward moral tendency.

Virtue is noble self-will;

I have touched already upon the first of these. Virtue would not be virtue, nor generosity generosity, with the charm which we find in those ideas, if it were not for the consideration that we *choose* to be virtuous. It is the highest putting forth of what is as important a part of man's nature as his capacity for happiness, namely, his will. Virtue is noble self-will. I should think it probable that the more people were, for instance, earnest and enthusiastic philanthropists, the less they could give a reason why they were so. It is *in* them. They will say, it is what they like to do: and this, it is to be observed, is not the same as saying, in an Epicurean sense, that they find their happiness in it: they are not attentive to the enjoyment, but attentive to the work.

rightness of action depending just as much on the putting forth of the

Human action, the putting forth of human nature, is a good thing in itself, and such of it as is really action, that is, is not absorbed in self or in the sustentation of the acting being, has its degree of value in this way independent of the purpose

[1] pp. 26—29.

worthy activity of human nature as on conducive-ness to happiness.

to which it is applied, though conjunctly with this value it is required that the purpose should be a fitting one. But for the value of the action altogether and on the whole, this goodness in the purpose and result is not more required on the one side than goodness in the principle and the manner on the other. To say, right action is that which is conducive to happiness, is only true in the same manner in which it is also true to say, right action is the putting forth of the worthy activity of human nature. What we mean here by rightness, that is, moral value, is given to the action not more by the one consideration than by the other. And the same knowledge of human nature, which is required in order to give us the knowledge what is man's happiness, will in an equal degree give us the knowledge what is for him worthy life and action.

The character of aspiring-ness shown in the moral application of the terms 'high' and 'low'.

The charm in virtuous action arising in this manner from its voluntariness, from the sort of disposition which we suppose connected with it to forego or make sacrifices, to be liberal of our moral power, to extend our carefulness beyond ourselves, to initiate moral action and to have a purpose to work for rather than to be only on the defensive against what may diminish and injure our happiness, to be hopeful and trustful rather than fearful and self-intent—this charm or value in actions is closely connected in many respects with the other which I spoke of, which arises from the *aspiringness* or upward tendency of human nature. No terms have played a more important part in moral philosophy than those of 'high' and 'low' in application to actions and feelings. The ideas connected with them have been at all times most practically effective, and at all times also the subject of much attack, defence, and discussion.

The original idea of virtue is that of excellence, implying superiority of one man to another, and of man in general to animals.

So far as, with the various applications which moralists have made of the term *virtue*, and its correspondents in the ancient languages, there has been anything of a continuity of idea in it, that idea has probably been, rather than any other, the idea of *excellence*. This is not exactly the idea of merit, though they are nearly the same: merit seems more or less to imply an actual estimation by another party: excellence is what merit rests upon. Excellence in itself has very little meaning except as relative and comparative*. It implies a sort of previous supposition of what should be, of what makes value or worthiness, and it expresses in actual fact degrees of this.

This idea, as might be expected with a thing so complicated, soon attracted others to it, and among the Romans virtue denoted doubtless not only relative superiority, but usefulness for the purposes which people then thought most desirable, which were mainly those of war, and also carelessness of danger and readiness to make sacrifices. But the virtue or excellence of men, as introduced

* If any one should say, that this being so, we had better not talk about 'excellence,' or introduce the notion, for that after all it can really represent no more than human opinion (a thing which, in substance, has been said abundantly, and which the words which we use to express excellence, a very abstract idea, are, owing to the nature of language, not unlikely to suggest), I would refer him to what Paley says about 'happiness.' He is satisfied with explaining the term 'in a comparative sense,' as a 'relative term,' the degree of it depending on the excess of pleasure over pain: and while speaking of various possible *positive* or non-relative significations of it, treats the consideration of them as not of great importance. (Paley, *Mor. and Pol. Phil.* B. I. ch. 6.) Happiness, in fact, like excellence, is an 'idea,' in regard of which mutual communication of thought is very difficult, and variety of human opinion great, while at the same time we cannot help taking much account of such opinion: but this is no reason why we should in either case distrust the reality and importance of the idea, and confuse it with the human opinion which we perhaps cannot help intermingling with the designation of it.

into moral consideration by Aristotle, is simply that according to which a man, as *one man*, differs for the better from other men, and as *man* differs for the better from other races of creatures. He investigates the *generic* excellence of man, which will give, according to the measure of it in each man, his *individual* excellence.

It is on an analogy of this kind in reference to the use of the words 'high' and 'low' that a grand though insufficient system of morality may be (and to a certain extent has been) founded. Virtue *in general* would consist, according to such a system, in man's living worthily of his high place in the creation as the noblest of animals, and *individual* virtue would consist in the superior degree in which one man did so in comparison with another.

The words 'high' and 'low' have also a second application in reference to the internal constitution of each man. (Bp. Butler on Conscience.)

But the terms 'high' and 'low' receive a further application from the fact that man has been from the first beginning of moral philosophy considered a microcosm, or universe in himself, having what we may call an inward organization. The principles and impulses upon which he acts being thus regarded as members of an internal constitution, or parts of an internal system, the idea of subordination and relative importance among them is of immediate occurrence. This internal constitution in earlier times rather suggested the idea of a state with government, in later times rather that of a machine or system with regulation. It is to the former idea that the words 'high' and 'low' more properly belong: and when Bishop Butler, in the last century, after transforming the idea of the moral principle as the governing power in a state into the idea of it as the regulating power in a machine or system, (an idea more agreeable to the then habits of thought,) goes on to speak of the moral principle or

conscience as having 'divine authority,' and uses other similar phrases, we feel that such language belongs rather to the older, than to the newer, edition of the theory.

To recapitulate what has been said: man is, morally speaking, (that is, independently of what religion may teach us of his dependence in these respects upon a superior and divine power), of his own moral making, and it is his nature to aspire. In thinking of himself as having powers, and asking himself how he may best use those powers, the idea of action as honourable and worthy cannot fail to come to him; and though this idea may be connected very much with actual estimation, and in this respect with opinion and praise from others, it does not depend upon this: the feeling or action is felt as having a value on which the praiseworthiness follows; and a value in itself, besides what may be given to it by its result, by the good it does. This value may be considered to consist first, in the goodness or desirableness which attaches to human action as the putting forth of man's nature, independently of uses which such action may subserve: and secondly, in the degree of approximation to an ideal which it is man's nature to form imaginatively and to aspire to.

Thus action is valued independently of its results, partly as it is a putting forth of man's nature, partly as it approaches an ideal.

The idea that man's moral being is an internal constitution is the foundation of the morality of self-government, and of that view which would describe virtue as the acting upon the higher principles of our nature; a view which perhaps, if we look at the whole literature of moral philosophy, may be considered to occupy the larger part of it. In some respects, the utilitarian view (rather than exactly the utilitarian philosophy) may be considered to have been a reaction against the too exclusive prevalence

The morality of self-government, which is founded upon the idea of an internal constitution, fails to supply a purpose. Utilitarianism attempting to remedy

this defect goes too far on the other side.

of *this* view, and not an unwholesome one. When we see so much said, as moral philosophers have said, about self-control, self-government, self-cultivation, one is apt to ask, What is it all for? does morality, after all, then, end in ourselves? do we live here only to *live*, and not to *do* anything, not to do any work, not to carry into effect any purpose, more, that is, than to take care of ourselves? A good deal of the ancient philosophy, growing vigorously and nobly as it did for a certain distance, seemed to strike upon a stratum it could not get through, and so to become after a time stopped and stunted, obliged to rest contented with man being an end to or for himself, good passing of life or good self-management his highest aim, no idea being attained of action as real doing or production, but only as acting for acting's sake. So far as utilitarianism in this state of things may be regarded as supplying to men an end beyond themselves, it has done for moral philosophy exactly what was wanted, and has really given to it a new life. Utilitarianism is of course not the only thing which has tended to do this.

But insufficient as the philosophy of mere high and low self-command may be, occupying itself so much in oiling the machine and keeping it in repair as never to set it to work, the philosophy of utilitarianism on its side is insufficient, so far as it thinks to supersede the other: thought needs to be given to the machine which is to do the work as well as to the nature of the work to be done. And in truth this machine is more than a machine, for the work is for it as well as it for the work.

As in moral philosophy, so in moral opinion:

As the tendency of moral philosophy has in the main been to dwell too exclusively on considerations of self-command; so the tendency of moral opinion

not philosophical has perhaps been to dwell too exclusively on considerations of *honour*. Honour, self-devotion, generosity, faithfulness, are things which draw much attention and strike the mind. It has constantly happened, that the standard of the world (so to call it) has been higher than that taught by professed moralists: that is, those who think but little about morality, and perhaps trouble themselves very little to square their actions to it, nevertheless when they do think about it, want it good and high. The ordinary following of a worse standard may even improve the intellectual view and approval of a better, by preventing this from being too importunate and troublesome. Consequently the standard of moral opinion not philosophical has commonly been a standard of honour high-strung and often noble, but irregularly and capriciously applied, and leading, it may be, to vice rather than to virtue. Here again the utilitarian view has done good service in respect of moral opinion, as we have seen the more distinct utilitarian philosophy has done in respect of philosophy. Ideas of honour want *some* questioning, though the *too much* questioning of them would be the ruin of the best part of human nature. While the poets, who in the mouths of one and another of their characters may speak different languages, call honour at one time a bubble, and at another the only thing worth living for, it should be the business of philosophy to see what there is in it valuable and what not. In this respect utilitarianism has done good service, only that a morality of utilitarianism is as incomplete as a morality of honour. Even human describable happiness, valuable as it may be, would be increased at too dear a rate, if we lost that variety of self-sacrifice, of enterprise, of trustfulness, of many other

considerations of honour and considerations of utility are both required.

qualities of the same kind, which have a value higher than anything can have as conducive merely to happiness, (in so far as the elevation of mind attending them is something itself better than the best happiness); and yet which often, so far as results are concerned, may seem mistaken and thrown away. But still we want heroism shown and work done, both: the former is not always empty where it has not the latter to show, but at least it cannot be empty where it has.

Having however explained so far what seems to me to be the real goodness or valuableness of virtue, and the degree to which utilitarianism has aided the consideration of this, I will in another chapter examine the utilitarian exhibition of that goodness or valuableness, and mention the points in which I think it erroneous.

CHAPTER VII.

UTILITARIAN VIEW OF THE GOODNESS OF VIRTUE.

HAVING given in the last chapter what seems to me the proper account of the nature of virtue, and of the reasons why we value it, I proceed in the present chapter to make some remarks on the account which Mr Mill gives of these same things.

There is no ground for assuming that there can be only one kind of moral value attaching to actions.

I have prefixed to them some observations on the question how far it is necessary that there should be one source or ultimate test of moral valuableness, and one only. For the reader will bear in mind that my disagreement with utilitarianism has mainly reference to its claim to supersede all other philosophy, and to occupy the whole ground of morals to itself. I do not deny the importance, in regard of actions, of their conduciveness to happiness: what I controvert is the philosophy which would assert that there is no other original and primary reason which can make us take interest in actions, and consider them good or valuable, except this.

It appears to me, then, that the utilitarian formula, (namely, that action is right or good, in proportion as it tends to promote happiness), if meant not only to describe a fact, but to express also the meaning of rightness or goodness, or tell us what

it is that constitutes the rightness or goodness of an action, is insufficient, whatever modification we may give to the idea of happiness, or in whatever way we may determine that. Right action may be conducive to happiness as it may be to various other things, and this may be one character to know it by: but if it is intended to express that it is this conduciveness which, in our world of men, makes the rightness or goodness, the formula, as I have said, is insufficient. For that there is and must be recognized by men a goodness or valuableness quite different from conduciveness to happiness, such as that which I have described above, cannot, I think, be doubted. There is nothing which need surprize us in there being more than one sort of moral value attaching to actions: and it is far better to submit to whatever philosophical disappointment we may feel in having to acknowledge such a plurality, than to outrage at once the well-observed sentiment of men, and the inward language of our own heart and reason. If we listen to the voice of human nature, we must put by the side of the utilitarian formula, as a sister, one of this kind: Actions are right and good in proportion as they rise above the *merely* natural or animal conditions of human nature, (as self-care or self-preservation), and the obedience to immediate impulse, more especially to the impulses of bodily passion and excitement.

Utilitarians hold that conduciveness to happiness is the one ultimate test of moral value, and that virtue has only a

What utilitarians will say (and Mr Mill in these papers has said some things to that effect[1]) is, that they recognize this latter kind of value of actions as dependent upon the former: that the experience of mankind, in observing what sort of actions are most for the general interest, has led them to attribute to virtue and generosity a value which has adhered

[1] p. 53 &c.

to them so closely through association and habit, that we now think it primary and original, whereas it is only secondary and derived. In reality, however, as I have shown before, value for actions as conducive to the *general* happiness is as much a secondary and derived principle (if either are to be called so) as value for actions in their character as virtuous or generous. The simply natural principle in the one case is regard for happiness (if we are so to call it), or rather, desire of one thing and another, for ourselves. And along with this, in the other case, as I have said, is the similarly natural feeling of activity or consciousness of power; commensurate, of course, in the first instance, with our consciousness, that is, only prompted to operation by circumstances of our own being. Sympathy in the region of feeling, duty in the region of reason, *moralize* (to use Mr Mill's word) these merely natural feelings. The *general* happiness is then thought of and wished for, and (correspondently with this) a purpose for action beyond our immediate selves, and beyond what our bodily feelings prompt, is thought of, and wished for. And I do not see why we should say that elevation of mind (to use that expression) derives all its moral value from the action for the general happiness which it prompts, rather than we should say that action for the general happiness derives all its value from the elevation of mind which it implies in those who act thus. Happiness is a good thing, and elevation of mind is a good thing: why, as men are here, each should not be good with a goodness of its own, why we must derive one from the other, I cannot tell.

secondary value derived from this by association. They forget that care for the *general* happiness is itself equally derivative. In the former case the natural feeling of activity, in the latter the natural desire of pleasure, is moralized by reason and sympathy.

Among the different characters which an action may have, it seems clear that its being good as *honourable* or *generous*, good as *right* (the nature of

The honourable, the right, and the

useful, are independent ideas, though they lead to the same practical result.

which goodness I shall speak of in a moment, in treating of duty), good as *useful,* are different ideas: it may be the fact that an action which is good in any one of the ways is good in the others also: we may conclude that it is likely to be so, from the consideration that were it not so, morality would be a perplexity in which it would be even impossible for a man to see his way clearly: the proving that it is so, so far as it goes, is a proving that the different parts of the moral world are consistent and good. But supposing any one should refuse to give up the ideas of fairness and generosity as independent ideas, and to merge them into that of usefulness, and say that all that they have of moral goodness is derived from *that* character in them; I do not see to what kind of proof Mr Mill can appeal to convince him. It does not seem to follow from the nature of things that there can be no possible character about actions besides their comparative usefulness which may make one morally preferable to, and more to be recommended than, another: it certainly seems to be a fact that men *do* value fairness and generosity without the *appearance* that they do so only because these things are publicly useful. Doubtless a morality of utility may be constructed; the idea of moral goodness may be attributed to the useful alone; other ideas about actions, which it is admitted lead in most respects to the same practical *result* as considerations of utility, may without great difficulty be considered as dependent upon them; but still the question will remain, does all this either answer to what people *do* think, or can it be proved that it is the way they *ought* to think?

A morality based exclusively upon the

A mere and exclusive morality of utility may thus, it appears to me, exist with just the same degree of truth and advantage as a mere and

exclusive morality of self-command, self-cultivation, and generosity. With moderate claims on the part of each, they may both exist independently and without contradicting each other: if either claims to occupy the whole field, and to represent the whole fact as to human morality, it is so far false and wrong. But when they keep clear of each other, they may be said to treat of different subjects, and move in different elements. This is a disadvantage as causing a waste of words in argument, for there is no common standard or principle on which the argument is to go, and each brings charges against its opponent which are of importance only from its own point of view, and from any other are no charges at all. It is further a disadvantage in respect of the whole consideration of morality, as causing a divorce of things which ought to be considered together, and in regard of which the argument ought to arise, not from a claim of one or the other to the dominion, but from the effort to show how it is that, each having its own truth, they yet exist in harmony together, as observation of life shows us that in the main they do. And from this disadvantage moral philosophy itself gets into deserved discredit. The man without moral philosophy cannot help sometimes feeling himself of wider and truer views than those who profess to teach him, however little he may be able to answer their arguments.

useful is just as partial as a morality based upon either of the others would be.

Speaking generally, partial systems of morality, of which utilitarianism is preeminently one, take their origin from a reluctance on the part of their authors to face the real difficulties of ethics. 'It is morally good to act for the general happiness.' This is the fact, agreed upon by all. What is it that is morally *not good,* which stands in opposition to this?

The partial character of each system of morality is shown in its negative side.

for the knowledge of this must determine what we may call the *point* of the former proposition. Here it is that partial systems begin. In answer to the latter question, utilitarianism says, Acting for unhappiness. Utilitarian moral philosophy thus has for its subject the finding out what happiness is, as distinguished from unhappiness, and how it is to be acted for. In answer to the same question another philosophical system will say, Acting for our own happiness rather than for that of others or for the general happiness. And such a philosophy will have for its subject the considerations of sympathy, duty, virtue, or whatever else raises the thoughts from individual desires and interests into the wider and more general sphere. The two philosophies, it will be seen, need never meet. Both are partial, but of the two it is the latter which is the more extensively applicable, and the more like what people in general will understand as moral philosophy. We feel the value of our own happiness, but we should not feel the value of that of others if we had not the capacity and, as a moral feeling, the tendency to rise above the consideration of our own individual interests. So on the other side we have this latter capacity and tendency, but it is not such virtue as we can imagine and should wish for, unless it is rightly applied, and unless the happiness of others is really advanced by it. In an action then which, in the truest and widest sense, we should call right or good, there is more than one sort of goodness. And unless we treat rightly this variety of rightness or goodness, our moral philosophy, whatever side we take, must be partial: and we shall not be able to argue against opponents of it without being in danger of arguing against something which, it is probable, an impartial and practical reader will

An action which is in the truest sense good has more than one kind of goodness.

consider to be morally as important as anything which we defend.

I have said nothing about Mr Mill for some time. The manner in which his way of thinking differs from mine may be seen perhaps best in p. 56, where he is speaking about the love of virtue. He there says that virtue is originally and in the first instance only valuable, or 'a good,' as a means for the production of happiness: but that, from the association of the idea of it with the idea of the happiness of which it is productive, it may, as a psychological fact, come to be looked on by the individual as valuable in itself or a good in itself. The next step however taken by Mr Mill puts me in some little difficulty; for he says, speaking in the name of utilitarians[1], 'that the mind is not in a right state, not in a state conformable to utility, not in a state most conducive to the general happiness, unless it does love virtue in this manner—as a thing desirable in itself,' independent of the production of the consequences on account of which it is held to be virtue. When we find such language as 'the mind being in a right state' in the mouths of impugners of a supposed intuitivist philosophy, we are at first probably led to think whether such a philosophy be not what 'expellas furca, tamen usque recurret:' what, utilitarians and positivists though we be, we cannot avoid. We must not indeed press the word 'right,' (or 'ought,' which is very likely to occur in the same manner), into particulars, and conclude from it that, do what we will, we cannot avoid confessing in our language a morality of *rule* as against a morality of end or consequences: but we may conclude that we cannot write many consecutive words upon a moral

Mr Mill holds that virtue is only valuable, in the first instance, as a means to the production of happiness; but that the mind of the individual is not in a right state unless it comes to look upon it as valuable in itself.

[1] p. 53.

subject without involving what I have called 'idealism' as contrasted with 'positivism,' whether the ideal be a rule to act by or an end to gain. The mind's 'being in a right state' is something apparently which Mr Mill's readers are expected to recognize and understand. An appeal is made to an idea which they are supposed to have. So far as such an appeal is really intended, I cannot see what is the use of professing to build the philosophy on experience as contrasted with a supposed intuitivism.

Which is the truth, that which it is right for the individual to believe, or that which the system teaches? Is virtue really valuable independently of consequences, or is it not?

If we conclude however that 'right' here has no reference to 'reasonable' or 'proper,' but is explained by the expressions which come afterwards, so that what is meant is that it is conducive to human happiness that men should be under this delusion, I can only say that this seems to me very extraordinary. Utilitarianism says that the rightness, goodness, valuableness of actions lies only in their conduciveness to happiness, and yet we are told that it is right and conducive to happiness that men should believe in something (virtue to wit) as having a goodness and value in itself, *independent* of its conduciveness of happiness—is not this equivalent to saying, that however true utilitarianism may be, it is not well that men should believe in it and act upon it? Is it a sort of arcanum, upon which the initiated may act, while the ordinary world will best be left to the old delusion of regard to, and value for virtue?

Mr Mill tries to evade the difficulty by confining himself to action and refusing to take feeling into account.

It seems to me that if utilitarianism does recognize virtue, as we may be certain that such utilitarians as Mr Mill will do, the only way in which it can avoid this difficulty of making virtue, the so-called child of utility, supersede its parent, or utilitarianism teach in practice non-utilitarianism, is to divorce the considerations of action and feeling, and say that, while rightness of action consists in conduciveness to

happiness, goodness of feeling consists in regard to virtue: then to vindicate the former as the true province of utilitarianism, leaving the latter to whatever philosophy may be able most fitly to deal with it. And this is what Mr Mill, in his utilitarian character, appears to do. In pages 26, 28, he mentions two objections which have been made to utilitarianism, and replies to them. The first objection is that it gives too high a standard for individual action, viz regard to the general interests of society: the second, that it makes men cold and unsympathizing, having regard only to the dry and hard consequences of actions. Mr Mill answers the first objection partly, as it seems to me, by rather unsaying what he had said in the previous page, and giving as utilitarianism, not what he had there given, the idea of the arithmetical equality of the happiness of each, but the idea, inconsistent with this, which is given us by considerations of sociality, sympathy, and duty. All this I have to a certain degree spoken of before. But he answers the same objection partly also by drawing attention to the distinction between the rule of action and the motive of action. And he vindicates to the utilitarian moralists, as compared with others, the praise of having taken special care to maintain that the motive has nothing to do with the morality of the action, though much with the worth of the agent.

Example of this, (1) in his answer to the objection, that utilitarianism gives too high a standard;

I will ask the reader to bear this in mind for a short time while we turn to the other objection, that utilitarianism makes men cold and unsympathizing, taking account, as it does, only of the hard and dry consequences of action. Surely if all those considerations of sociality and sympathy, which Mr Mill gives with such beauty in his third chapter, can be claimed by utilitarianism, a most triumphant answer may be given to this charge. But it is not so answered by

(2) in his answer to the objection, that utilitarianism makes men unsympathizing.

Mr Mill. Rather, he finds in it a gross misapprehension of the meaning of a standard of morality, and of the words right and wrong. The purpose of utilitarianism, he tells us, is to show us what actions are right and wrong, independent of any consideration of the character or feelings from which they emanate: this is a process of simple reason, and the expressions hardness and dryness constitute therefore no charge in regard of it. These are my words: but I do not think I am misrepresenting what Mr Mill says at greater length. 'There may be,' he says, 'many other things to interest us in persons, besides the rightness and wrongness of their actions:' 'many desirable qualities and possessions besides virtue,' (which 'virtue' here must mean, I suppose, the 'rightness of actions' mentioned above, so far as that may be called a quality and possession:) 'the considerations whether the man who acts is amiable, brave, benevolent, or the contrary, are relevant, not to the estimation of actions, but of persons.' And he then goes on in the next paragraph to do in regard of this objection what I have mentioned his doing in regard of several others, namely, to admit the reasonableness of the charge to a certain extent, and in reference to some utilitarians, 'who have cultivated their moral feelings, but not their sympathies, nor their artistic perceptions[1].'

Such a separation of the moral feelings from the sympathies mischievously narrows the scope of moral philosophy; and is also

I think it must be concluded from all this that utilitarianism, to say the least, does not succeed better than any of the partial systems of morality which have gone before it in giving us what I may call a morality of human nature. For myself, I should want no more to condemn an ethical system in my eyes, than the fact that it did nothing to prevent the cultivation of the moral feelings apart from that

[1] p. 29.

of the sympathies, nor can I understand the nature of the moral feelings which can be so cultivated. They can hardly be the same feelings which Mr Mill[1] has described as 'moralizing' a merely natural feeling, (that, namely, of resentment): for these are feelings of 'the demands of social good:' and the manner in which these feelings arise by sympathy is pointed out by Mr Mill in the very admirable passage to which I have so often referred. They are moral feelings to which, not to say artistic perceptions, but even considerations of amiableness, bravery, benevolence, are not relevant: they take account, it would seem, of a few only of the 'things which interest us in persons' or of 'the desirable possessions and qualities' which there may be in them. I do not think that this is the sort of moral philosophy which we want. I do think that now that Christianity is come, we might have a moral philosophy going ethically as wide as *it* goes: a philosophy that,—'whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest or venerable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise,'—should think and tell us about all these things. So again moral philosophy is wanted to correct general feeling and literature, and for this purpose it must have its range as wide as they: 'Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas, gaudia, discursus,' should be, not the 'farrago' of its books, but if possible their digested substance.

inconsistent with Mr Mill's own teaching.

Instead of this, Mr Mill seems to exhibit to us, as the utilitarianism which he defends, a system which in its practical part, when it moves in the midst of the breathing and living world of men, is one of bare

A philosophy which shows such an imperfect conception of

[1] p. 76.

human nature disqualifies for a true judgment of human happiness.

and narrow-minded reason, while in its higher and theoretical part, where reason is specially wanted, it gives us only the vast assumption, that happiness in the vague idea of it, without consideration whose or what it is, is the only thing which man either does, or can, consider valuable. And how can men, who leave out of their moral account so much that is of interest in man, who admit that *their* way of cultivating their moral feelings affords but a partial and narrow developement of their nature, be competent to know and to tell man what is his happiness, upon which knowledge (in their view) that of right and wrong entirely depends? That utilitarianism supposes human happiness, as it does, to be so readily known and so simply acted for, which is in the eyes of Bentham and others a main proof of its truth, is to me a sign of an imperfect conception of human nature which is entirely condemnatory of the philosophy. We are to trust the calculation of what constitutes our happiness, and consequently the determination of what is right and wrong for us, into the hands of men who avow themselves neglectful and incognizant of much which we cannot but consider the most important part of our nature.

General philosophical difficulty of explaining the relation of right action to good feeling.

It is not however here my purpose to remark further on the imperfect manner in which utilitarianism, of the kind which Mr Mill here refers to, must judge of our happiness, but rather to observe that utilitarianism does not seem better able than the philosophies before it to solve the difficulty of the relation between right actions and good feeling or character. In a general way, philosophers have found it difficult to look at the two in conjunction. The history of moral philosophy shows an oscillation from the one side to the other, each successive change of view seeming to its initiators a great reform or regene-

ration. Ardent spirits, impatient at the resultlessness of one or the other view, whichever it has been, and probably little acquainted with past philosophic history, have thought that they were entering on a new course when they rushed over to the other view. It is thus that in the Scotch philosophy, say of Dugald Stewart, moral philosophy is considered a theory of human good feeling, and little or nothing is said of what we ought to do; while to the more practical mind of Bentham moral philosophy offers itself simply as showing what we ought to do, and about good feeling or character we have very little.

It is only where morality takes the form of law that the two should be kept apart.

Wherever morality ought to take the form of law, it is most important that the distinction, which Mr Mill has observed upon, between the rightness of the action and the worthiness of the agent should be most carefully attended to. There are many circumstances in regard of which there is one right thing to be done by the agent whoever he may be, and where his character in respect of these is of no account. But of the mass of human actions, it is but a small part that can be predetermined by reason in this manner. The term 'action' denotes an abstraction which, in respect of a great deal of moral conduct, is hardly applicable. The mass of human life consists of action or behaviour not aimed at an end or fixed by a rule, but resulting from our general manner of thinking and acting. And thus Mr Mill's use of the phrase 'morality of an action' to express only the legal definability of it as a thing to be done; the contrast of the morality of the action, thus understood, with the worth of the agent, and the apparent consideration of the former only, or at least pre-eminently, as the thing worth consideration in moral philosophy;—all this seems to show that tendency to

divorce things which it should be the business of moral philosophy to consider in conjunction, to which I have more than once alluded. I question whether, upon any principles belonging to itself, utilitarianism *can* bring the two things together.

Both considerations are necessary to moral goodness.

In fact it seems to me that the two considerations, that of useful conduct and that of virtuous feeling, can best be brought together *in the end* by the full recognition *in the beginning* of the difference of idea which there is between them. The idea of virtue arises from there being in us a disposition and a temptation to something which nevertheless there is also an impulse in us to rise above, and it is this rising which constitutes virtue. (As I understand what I have called philosophical utilitarianism or utilitarianism in its better form, a great point of it is the negation of this fact as being of any moral significance.) At the same time that there exist in us this temptation and this impulse, there exist in the world around us various purposes to which our energies may be directed. Of these purposes, the worthiest in fact and in its nature is that of the general happiness: but the one most pressing upon us, most allying itself with what I have called the lower disposition and temptation, is what, not very correctly but intelligibly, we may call our own happiness. It is essentially above this temptation to consider ourselves alone that the upward impulse, which is virtue, raises us: and at the same time reason and moral imagination or sympathy supply to the feeling thus elevated an object and a purpose, and confirm its elevation. Moral goodness, so far as these two considerations are concerned, flows from the meeting or confluence of them as constituents of it: it combines, that is, desirableness of end and worthiness of principle or motive. It is a condition of our world

that the two are able to run together: we can imagine a world in which virtue might of necessity be barren, in which, for example, the risks of nature might be so great that no course of action could be depended on for any result—even then virtue would preserve *its* value: and virtue gives the larger contribution to the stream of complete moral goodness, for if we imagine a state of happiness in which there was no place for virtue, nothing as it were for it to do, I am not sure that happiness would preserve *its* value.

In actual practice too, in the conduct of life, the two considerations do not hinder, but aid, each other.

Having spoken so far on the subject of *virtue*, I will proceed now to *duty*.

CHAPTER VIII.

DUTY AND THE UTILITARIAN SANCTIONS.

The idea of duty not congenial to utilitarians in general.

NOT to dwell then longer on virtue, I come now to another kind of moral value attaching to actions, namely, that which belongs to them as parts of *duty*, as actions which we *ought* to do. This idea of duty, with its associations of stringency and particularity to which I have already referred[1], is less congenial to utilitarianism than the greater freedom of virtue. Utilitarians as such would, I should conceive, prefer the non-existence of the idea; but it is so necessarily present to the minds of all, that account has to be given of it, and Mr Mill has accordingly given such an account in his third and fifth chapters.

General formula of duty: action is right, when it is what we ought to do.

Whatever people may think about the utilitarian formula or maxim to which I have so often alluded, there is in any case one formula or maxim of higher and more immediate evidence, namely, that an action is right when it is what we ought to do, and wrong when it is the reverse. The maxim however thus stated will probably appear insignificant and a mere identical proposition: right, and 'what we ought to do,' mean the same thing. If however, like Mr Mill in stating the utilitarian formula, we neglect in the word *right* the signification of exact duty involved in it, and mean by it only in general, good, preferable,

[1] See above, p. 96.

choiceworthy, fit, proper, desirable; and if, while understanding the first member of the proposition thus generally, we understand the second particularly, and consider what is meant by saying 'we ought to do a thing'; we have a maxim then which has meaning in the same manner that the utilitarian formula has, and which may take its place beside it for us to compare what degree of truth there may be in each.

Mr Mill divides moral action into two portions, to one of which the idea of duty is applicable in a looser, and to the other in a stricter sense.

Mr Mill seems to hold that the word *right*, in its strict sense, is applicable to all our action which is good, proper, or morally to be preferred to other action; that all such action is in a manner *duty* or what we ought to do: (at least it is thus I understand his speaking of a 'sanction' applicable to all the action which we do upon any moral consideration[1]). At the same time he considers that there is a certain portion of the action which in *this* sense is right, or what we ought to do, to which the idea that 'we ought to do it' applies in a very special and peculiar manner, quite different from the manner in which it applies to the rest[2]. And with all this he considers, as an utilitarian, that the only real or fundamental moral difference of actions is their being, or not being, useful, or (as I have called it) felicific[3]. On this view, all these ideas of actions being right or what we ought to do, in any distinct meaning of the words, must be either illusions, or forms of language, or ideas only derivative from, or dependent upon, utility. Mr Mill as a philosophic utilitarian has a difficult task before him. The more thorough-going utilitarians, whom he defends without great apparent sympathy with them, proceeded more vigorously in the matter, and were rather disposed to think that such words as

[1] *Util.* ch. 3. [2] *Ib.* ch. 5.
[3] See above, p. 67.

'ought,' in a moral application, had better not have existed[1].

Mr Mill has one chapter on Duty or on the Sanction of Morality, and another on Justice. In the former of these he may, speaking generally, be considered to deal with the application of the idea of an action being right, or what we ought to do, to the whole of morality: in the latter, with its application to the more particularly binding portions of it.

Mr Mill's use of the term 'sanction'

The former of these chapters Mr Mill entitles 'On the ultimate sanction of the principle of utility,' and out of a variety of synonymous expressions which he collects at the beginning of the chapter he selects that of 'sanction' as the most fit and, I suppose, the most readily understood. With respect to this term, from which I cannot think moral philosophy has derived any advantage, I can only speak for one on the question of intelligibility; but when applied so loosely as it is here and by utilitarian writers in general, I do not think it much helps understanding, and I still less think that it helps truth.

illustrated from supposed answers to the question, 'What makes you do such and such an act?'

Perhaps the reader may best understand the matter in this way: we can imagine one man asking with regard to a proposed action of another, What is there that should make you do it? The question, as I mean it, would imply that the questioner wanted to be informed as to a supposed state of facts which renders the action what should or ought to be done: it is the same as the question, What inducement is there for you to do it? on the supposition of the inducement being somewhat of an imperative and substantial, not merely imaginary, nature. The word 'inducement' thus understood will, I think, more

[1] Compare the often quoted sentence from Bentham's *Deontology*: 'If the use of the word ('ought') be allowable at all, it *ought* to be banished from the vocabulary of morals.'—Ed.

readily convey to the reader what ought to be meant than the word 'sanction.'

The person questioned might answer, Nothing makes me do it: I do it because I choose. In thus answering, he dismisses or ignores the notion of distinct inducement altogether; or, if we suppose the question to refer to good action in general, he ignores altogether the idea of duty or sanction. And this is much the easiest and simplest position for utilitarians to take up, with whom, as I have said, the idea of duty is at best a puzzle. Supposing anybody had suggested to Bentham to ask himself the question which Mr Mill[1] supposes somebody asking himself, Why am I bound to promote the general happiness? I should have thought the answer which both Bentham's feeling and philosophy would have suggested to him would have been[2], "I do not know that I am bound to do it at all: at least I have not much thought whether I was: the very thought would rather imply that I should naturally wish something else: I do it because I choose it, because I can conceive nothing more worthy of myself and everybody to do: I can hardly imagine anybody, unless influenced by private and sinister interests, thinking otherwise: my view of my business as a moral philosopher is that I have to study human happiness, and tell those who think in these respects as I do how they may best promote it: with those who do not care to promote it, or require to be bound to it before they do so, I have really no common ground to argue on."

The answer may be such as to ignore duty or sanction altogether. The action in that case may proceed from the voluntary principle of virtue; as is shown in Bentham's practical philanthropy.

We have here utilitarianism built upon a foundation of virtue or generosity, the radical idea of which

[1] *Util.* p. 39.

[2] Bentham's supposed answer agrees very well with his account of himself in one of his last memoranda: "I am a selfish man, as selfish as any man can be. But in me, somehow or other, selfishness has taken the shape of benevolence." *Works*, XI. 95.—ED.

I have described as being 'the doing of what is good and worthy because we choose to do it:' and the virtue of the basis is to me the strongest argument against the truth of the utilitarianism which makes the superstructure. If men were once persuaded that it was only happiness as happiness, which moralized actions directed towards it; then, considering always that the happiness which must first present itself to our mind is our own, I do not see whence the virtue would arise which could lead to such self-devotion to the general happiness as marked the life of Bentham. Utilitarianism owes all that is strong and good in it to a principle alien to itself.

Or the answer may be such as to exhibit either Mr Mill's *external*, or his *internal* sanction.

Returning to our question, we will suppose that the person questioned *has* an inducement, and is able to give a reason for his conduct. The answer may be either, I cannot help doing it, because the good result which I hope for from the doing it, or the bad result which I anticipate from the not doing it, is so great: or the answer might run, I must do it, because it is my business, it is what falls or belongs to me to do, it is what I am called upon to do, it is what is incumbent upon me.

The former of these two kinds of inducement, that of hope and fear, is what Mr Mill calls by the name of external sanction: inducement of the latter kind corresponds to what he calls internal sanction, but the account which he gives of it is not, it appears to me, the proper one.

Indeed I think it must strike the reader of this chapter of Mr Mill's, that however beautiful in several points of view, it is altogether unsatisfactory as an account of 'duty' or 'sanctions.' External sanctions are very slightly alluded to, and are dismissed by Mr Mill almost with contempt: and of the internal sanction all he seems to tell us is, that

it is 'a subjective feeling in our own minds[1].' Its nature *as a feeling* he afterwards describes very beautifully: but its nature as a *sanction*, why it should have this name given to it, he does not seem to tell us at all. I do not see what fresh knowledge the telling us that it is a *feeling*, and that it is a *subjective* feeling, gives to us when we know it is *internal:* nor do I see what a *subjective* feeling is here intended to be distinguished from. Nor do I see again how a feeling can be a sanction, except on a particular supposition which we shall notice presently. But I will first say a word on the term 'sanction.'

The term 'sanction' has reference to a law. A law has two characters about it: one, that it is founded on supposed reason, which those subjected to it, since they are intelligent beings, more or less enter into and are cognizant of, so that their acting according to the law is in part a continuance of the same operation of reason which determined the making of the law. Law in this view of it is analogous to usage and custom: it was described by the ancients as being ὁμολογία, an agreement or common understanding. Setting aside certain exceptional cases, the manner of action of the law upon the minds of the intelligent mass of those subjected to it is by more or less of consent to it, that is, to the reason of it; for they have the physical force on their side, and the law could not exist any further than as it was thus in practice consented to. But besides this (since, whatever might be the general consent, there will always be a great deal of individual tendency to disobedience) a law is provided with 'sanctions,' which fact gives to it the second character which I spoke of; that is, there is a

The term *sanction* is legal: it belongs to law, not as consented to, but as compelling through fear of punishment.

[1] *Util.* p. 41.

recognized authority in whose guardianship the law is, and punishments are denounced by this authority against those who disobey the law. In reality, there is no real significance in extending the term 'sanction' to include appeals to hope, namely, promises or bribes[1]: the word means really an appeal to fear alone, as by threats of punishment. And to be used with any propriety at all, it must always represent not a feeling, but a fact before the imagination as dreaded, though indeed that fact, so far as the word goes, might be a future feeling, as a matter of dread.

In reference to morality it tends to substitute the idea of enforced obedience for that of felt duty.

Now, even with regard to our view of law, it is always a mistake and a misfortune when the force of law is considered to reside only in its sanctions or denunciations of punishment. This however is not my business now. But it is a greater mistake and misfortune still when this view is transferred to the law of morality or of duty. And a part of the view of law as resting thus only upon sanctions is, that law must then be considered only as imposed by sovereign or superior power without regard of the sympathy or agreement of those subject to it. The supposition of law being under the guardianship, not of rightful authority, but of arbitrary power, is bound up with the supposition of its acting only by punishment. And when these suppositions are transferred to morals, we pass entirely away from the idea of felt duty to that of enforced obedience. The substitution of this idea of obedience for that of duty seems to make this part of morals so easy and simple, that it has abundantly been made: it has had charms for religious minds, on account of the infinite greatness and worthiness of Him to whom in the main duty is owed, God: it has had charms

[1] Austin (*Jurisprudence*, Vol. I. p. 8) finds fault with this extension of the term 'sanction,' as 'pregnant with confusion and perplexity.'—ED.

for another class of minds as getting rid of any feeling of distinction among actions other than what may arise from the fact that some are commanded, some not.

The reader will understand now why I said some time since that the use of the term 'sanction' in explaining the idea of duty helped neither understanding nor truth. Supposing any *proper* meaning of 'sanction' is kept to, the idea of duty is disfigured and disguised: suppose the meaning of 'sanction' is loosely extended, the reader is merely puzzled.

Mr Mill's *internal* sanction is not properly a sanction at all.

Mr Mill, though using the word 'sanction,' to which, as a professed utilitarian, we may suppose him in duty bound, does not at all keep to the idea. He dismisses shortly, as we have seen, the external sanctions, to which the term properly applies. He certainly was not likely to be satisfied with, or take pleasure in, the idea that duty is simply that, which if we do not do, we shall be punished. He accordingly comes to his *internal* sanction. But the word 'sanction,' we have seen, means an appeal to fear: a 'sanction' is something intended to act upon the present feeling by imagination of something in the future; which something in the future may indeed be a future feeling of pain counteracting the present feeling: but to give the name of 'sanction' to a present feeling of dislike, or pain, or whatever it may be, is an entire misuse of language. Such a *present* feeling may be a very real thing, but it can tell us nothing about duty: it can do nothing to answer the question with which Mr Mill begins his chapter, Why am I bound to do such and such a thing? And thus all the feeling of sociality, into which he so beautifully developes his internal sanction, though most real, does nothing to explain what he is here explaining.

Two views of duty analogous to two kinds of obedience to law.

In reality, the inducement, in the way of fact, which leads us to do what we think to be our duty, is of the same double kind as that which I have described to be the inducement to the obedience to law in general: and so I have above supposed the answer to the question, Why must you do such a thing? what is there to make you do it? either to have regard to something which will happen to us according as we do, or do not, the thing; or to have regard to the fact of the thing being in some way what we are called upon to do, what belongs to us. It is the latter of these which is the proper feeling of *duty*, or of the thing being due from us: and it is analogous to that feeling of the reason of a law which makes us obey it as consenting parties to it, independent of any sanction. The former of the two kinds of answer implies a view of duty, if we are to call it so, analogous to such obedience as is rendered to laws in view of their sanctions or denunciations: it is not the rational recognition of duty or dueness, but the feeling, animal as well as rational, of constraint or compulsion, acting by means of threats and fear. It is a very real view of duty, and a very efficient one; but subsidiary to the other, and of a far less worthy nature.

Illustration given from the duty of truthfulness. Ground of this duty (1) according to Paley, (2) according to utilitarians generally,

To take a particular case in illustration—the duty of truthfulness—suppose the question asked which Paley begins with[1]: Why am I obliged to keep my word? or, as I have expressed the question, Why must I speak the truth? what is there to make me? Paley answers the question at once from the consideration of the external sanctions, and very broadly, as his wont is, considers the obligation to be constraint *ab extra*, quite independent of any reference to the

[1] B. II. ch. 1.

thing itself due;—we must do it, because we shall be fearfully punished if we do not; and if we do this and other things, shall be largely rewarded. With respect to this consideration, *valeat quantum*—let it influence those whom it does or may influence. And the same with regard to a more worthy consideration, which would probably be given as the utilitarian answer to the question, namely, the vast advantage to society of general truthfulness. This, in so far as it enters into the reason of the law or practice, is a partial recognition of duty. But I apprehend that the real answer, which is *felt* in the minds of those who feel simply and well, is: 'I feel that I must speak the truth because I know that I am trusted: I feel that trust reposed in me calls for truthfulness from me, and calls with a voice which I cannot stifle or disobey: it is the person who trusts me to whom in the first instance I am under the obligation of truthfulness, an obligation under which he by his trust lays me, which so far makes me not free, and binds my action.' I say 'in the first instance,' because though this is, I believe, the fundamental form of the duty of truthfulness, it is not the only form in which, if we are morally instructed, it should be felt by us, nor altogether the form in which it should be left: truth is a duty to society, and this consideration may, under exceptional circumstances, modify the other: but it is a duty to the other party first. It is a duty too which preeminently takes to itself the character, besides that of duty owed to any one, of individual virtue: thus considered, it is independent of any feeling of the other party towards us. And our consideration of the vast usefulness and absolute necessity of truthfulness to society is well calculated to enlarge and elevate our notion of the duty of it: in the true and higher notion of duty

(3) true ground.

therefore we are bound, as to speaking the truth, in the first instance to the listener who trusts us, in the second instance to society, of which we are a portion, and which calls for this on our part and in its measure trusts or reckons upon us also. The constraint which Paley speaks of is not the obligation itself, but only a subsidiary, or in a manner accidental, appendage to it: and even our recognition of truthfulness as useful to society is not the essence of the obligation, though it falls in with it, and greatly aids it: the obligation or duty is as I have described.

As we are bound to truthfulness, so we are bound to fairness in general; the feeling of duty makes us aware of facts which constitute the obligation.

In the same manner as we are bound to truthfulness, so we are bound to *fairness* in general; and the two important points as to this *boundness* of us to duty, or bindingness of duty upon us, are in the first place that it is *particular* (of this we have spoken already[1]): and in the second place, that the feeling which we have on the subject is one which is understood by us as pointing to a fact. The boundness or obligation is of course, as we are aware of it, a feeling: for in reality, some feeling of ourselves is all that under any circumstances we are aware of*; the external world is, if we choose to consider it so, a mass of impressions on the eye, ear, &c., from which are evolved, in the mind, certain results. But the feeling of obligation, like the feel-

[1] See above, p. 96.

* When Mr Mill speaks, p. 41, of the 'internal sanction of duty' as a 'subjective feeling of our minds,' the question arises, Does the *subjective* feeling that we ought to do something suggest to us that there exists *objectively* something which we ought to do; in the same way as the feeling of resistance to the closing of our fingers suggests the idea of a hard body in our hand? And if it does, is the suggestion legitimate? Are we right in concluding that such a thing does exist? In other words, if we have a subjective feeling that in important points the great heads of our rational and proper action are settled for us, so that as regards these points we are under rule; may we conclude from this that we *are* under rule, or is the feeling chimerical?

ings which make us aware of the external world, is a feeling which we understand as representing facts independent of us. It is not the feeling which binds or obliges us, but it is the state of facts of which we are thus made aware through the feeling.

The facts of which we are thus made aware are (1) that we are bound to the other party, (2) that we are responsible to the superior authority.

The fact of which we are informed by our feeling of duty is, in the first instance, that we are bound or under various obligations; in the second, that we are responsible for the fulfilment of these obligations. So far as we fail in our duty, we mentally recognise ourselves first as wrong-doers, or in the wrong; that is, our aspect in regard of the party to whom our duty is owed: next as punishable; that is, our aspect in regard to whatever superior authority may be the guardian of law and duty. The notion of duty carries with it that it is *claimable* by the party, and then *enforceable* by the superior authority backing him or coming into his place.

This fact of duty arises from man's activity, and from the various relations in which men stand to each other.

This fact of duty, or of dueness of an action from one man to another, arises in the main from the fact of the difference among men, and their complicated relations with each other, that same fact which we had to bear in mind in considering the distribution of action for their happiness. The fact of duty again, like that of virtue, is connected rather with the fact of the activity of man than with his capacity of happiness: with his having powers to be used, rather than with his wanting happiness to be enjoyed. These powers are his rudimental property. In the view of virtue, as we saw, his powers are his own, to use as he will, nobly if he chooses. But in reality man is born into a complicated scene, and before he is conscious or a free agent, he is hampered round with all sorts of circumstances, which, in a different point of view, make a large portion of his powers not his own, but variously *due*. And being, as he is

aware he is, born into society, and feeling as he perhaps does, how important his action is, how much of result to himself and others may flow from it; it is not unlikely that he may feel bound in regard to all his action, unable to believe himself his own master, and doubting whether he really and properly is so. This is the general feeling of duty.

Reason itself puts a restriction on action as on thought.

Reason itself constitutes to a certain extent a boundness of this kind: action according to reason stands in contrast to action which is capricious. Reason, intellectual, is the restraint of wild freedom of thought by reality and fact: and (conformably to this) reason, moral, is the restraint of wild caprice of choice by moral fact, that is, by considerations of our actual relations with others, as these concern our action.

Recognition of duty as particular. Table of *officia*.

The simple particularity of our duty, as regulating the distribution of our action among possible objects of it, is what is expressed by the term *officium*: a table of our *officia*, such as we have in the Church Catechism in the answer to the question 'What is thy duty towards thy neighbour?' is in reality an exhaustive, though summary, scheme for the entire regulation of our moral action, as complete as would be furnished us by a knowledge of the particulars of the happiness of others, and by a table of the different kinds of conduct promotive of it. For we stand in some relation to everybody: in the relation of fellow-men to those to whom we stand in no other. And we may say in general that of all this duty there are different degrees of stringency, imperativeness, or enforceableness, forming roughly a scale. Roughly only, because there are different *manners* in which one and another duty is owed, rendering it difficult to bring them into measurement together. Gratitude for instance is a

duty of fairness or justice, and in this way far more imperative than any call upon us for the simple duty of kindness, however urgent: and yet in definiteness, and therefore in this respect in stringency, it is a duty far beneath the simplest duties of exact justice, as honesty.

In general, the recognition of duty, as particular, (and by particularity I mean a continually expanding scale of it, terminating in wide generality) corresponds to that acknowledgment of the law in the reason of it, of which I have spoken: the recognition of duty, as enforceable, corresponds to obedience to law in view of its sanctions. When we do our duty, as duty, we act not freely indeed, as in the case of what I have called virtue, but we give the law to ourselves, or in scriptural language, we are a law to ourselves: when we do our duty as what we may be made to do, or punished if we do not do, we act quite as in bondage, though it may be a noble bondage.

But I will close this chapter, in order to proceed in the next to what is said by Mr Mill on this subject.

CHAPTER IX.

DUTY AND THE UTILITARIAN JUSTICE.

In his chapter on Justice, Mr Mill virtually gives up utilitarianism by introducing the idea of relative duty, and by recognizing vast distinctions between different kinds of utility.

Mr Mill, as I have mentioned, gives two chapters, one on moral sanctions or obligation, the other on justice. The two subjects are plainly kindred, and in order to judge of Mr Mill's idea of *duty*, they must be put together. I have spoken a good deal about the former of them. In the second of the two chapters he tries to show that the strong and marked idea which people have of justice as a virtue distinct from kindness, which is felt as a difficulty in the way of utilitarianism, is not really such a difficulty. In doing this he seems to me really to give up utilitarianism, a main feature of which, and one which has perhaps given more offence than any other, is the assigning universal utility as the reason for relative duty; saying, for instance, that we should love our parents and repay gratitude to a benefactor, because it is for the general happiness that these things should be done. Mr Mill, on the contrary, makes 'the disappointment of expectation[1]' one of the greatest miseries which one person can inflict upon another, and therefore one of the worst things which a man can do (it being an undoubted fact that

[1] *Util.* p. 89.

the person who has done a benefit does expect a return, that the trusting person expects truth, the mother expects affection, &c.). In doing this he introduces in reality the whole idea of fairness and of relative duty, and abandons the proper utilitarian supposition that human happiness is something definite, the same in the main for all, which we must impartially strive to produce for all, independently, it is to be supposed, of what one and another expect of us. Again the saying[1], that 'certain utilities are vastly more absolute and imperative than others,' and are 'guarded by a sentiment different in kind' from that which attaches to others, seems to me the giving up, for all practical purposes, utility in itself as the test of rightness. If we have to recognise vast distinctions among the different sorts of utility, and to take into the consideration of utility other considerations of quite a different kind, as of different kinds of sentiment with which the utilities are accompanied; I do not see why the philosophy should be called utilitarianism more than anything else.

The peculiar sentiment attaching, in Mr Mill's view, mainly to certain preeminent utilities and in a less degree to the whole of utility (which peculiar sentiment constitutes the former of these into the obligations of justice, and the latter into the general obligation of duty) is (it would appear) of a double nature; having reference, partly to another party whom the action concerns, in which case the sentiment is the feeling of the wrong which there is in disappointing expectation, and partly to a supposed superior power or authority, in which case the sentiment is the feeling of duty as *enforceable* (the word is mine), a thing which we may be punished for neglecting or disobeying. This account of the matter,

His view here is not unlike that which was given as the true view in ch. VIII.

[1] *Util.* p. 94.

so far as it is thus double, answers in a great measure to what I have given as in my view the right account. The idea of 'taking care not to disappoint expectations' is hardly different from the idea of 'taking care to satisfy claims,' which is in legal language, 'respecting rights,' 'suum cuique tribuere,' in Scripture language, 'rendering to all their dues.' All that seems in this respect required to qualify the whole mass of jural ethics for being embraced under the vast wing of so-called utilitarianism, is that it should so far change its language as, instead of rights and dues, to speak of 'reasonable expectations.' Of course what is thus reasonable can only be determined on the principle of what is fair. And the sentiment of duty is in reality nothing more than the feeling of *fairness*, the true feeling of *equity*, as distinguished from the feeling, wrongly assumed by Mr Mill as human and general, of the *equality*[1] of one person and another. Equity deals in the main with differences among men, with various 'expectations' (in Mr Mill's language), between one and another, and is what really constitutes society: equality, when the members of it are brought into juxtaposition, only leads to gregariousness. But of this anon[2].

It is however a special resource to meet a special difficulty, and does not belong to his general system.

But though Mr Mill's account thus to a considerable degree falls in with what I have given, there is yet much difference. The notion of the importance of particular expectations or, as I should call them, claims, comes in strainedly, because, to Mr Mill's wider view, dissatisfied with the narrowness of utilitarianism, it *must* do so; it comes in, according to the purpose of the chapter in which it is contained, to meet a difficulty, not as something naturally suggesting itself. This method of expansion of phi-

[1] *Util.* p. 91.

[2] See below, ch. xx.

losophy, the modifying and adding to it in order to meet difficulties, is not, I think, a very hopeful process for the discovery of truth. It is the old plan, 'to save appearances' by accumulating cycle on epicycle where the fault is in an originally wrong supposition, and it wants that disposition to look the facts in the face, to look at the whole in conjunction, which is likely to be best for truth.

It will be seen at once that Mr Mill's account of law and duty in p. 71 embraces one only of the two features which I assigned as belonging to them, the latter and the less important. 'Penal sanction,' he says, 'is the essence of law.' Of course I do not suppose him to be single in saying this. He has abundant authority, such as it is. When he comes however to 'duty,' (though it is only for the purpose of explaining this that he discusses law at all), he modifies his language[1]: 'It is *part of* the notion of duty in every one of its forms, that a person may *rightfully* be compelled to fulfil it.' (The italics are mine.) Of 'duty' then, as he properly says, the sanction is not the essence, but is only 'a part of the notion:' and the compulsion to do it must be 'rightful,' that is, it must not be compulsion simply by arbitrary power, but by proper authority: in other words, the subjects and the power are bound up into one society, rightful action being required from the power as well as from the subjects; or in other words, again, *duty* being superior over both, duty being in fact, even as between the subject and the enforcing power, something between two parties, not simple obedience to the latter. The fact then of duty being a scheme of recognised relation or mutual *dueness* between parties, is what, if we look at the former portion of Mr Mill's sentence,

Elsewhere he makes penal sanction the essence of law, and (with certain modifications) of duty;

[1] p. 71.

we must consider to constitute 'the rest of the notion of it' besides the part here given; if we look at the latter portion, it is what is understood in order to give us the meaning of the word 'rightfully.'

overlooking the fact that law involves right as well as power.

All this which is true about duty is true in the same manner about law in general. The penal sanction is really not the essence of it, it is only 'a part of the notion of it:' and in order that the state should be one of *law*, not of simple violence, the compulsion which results from the sanction must be 'rightful,' that is, the compelling power, that which affixes and enforces the sanction, must be 'rightful,' that is, again, it is itself part of the society which the law constitutes; bound by the law to its subjects as they to it: it is authority recognised by them as a part of the whole order of which their obedience is another part. And the most important part of the notion of law is, not its penal sanction, which concerns only such as may have inclination or temptation to disobey it, but the recognition by those subject to it, of a regulation of their actions towards each other in a manner which their individual reason and consent more or less falls in with.

Inconclusiveness of the etymological reasoning by which he supports this.

Mr Mill, as I have said, follows abundant authority in his view of the matter, and in his etymological support of it. Etymological reasoning however in moral subjects is a most narrow and difficult path between false etymology on the one side and false reasoning about possibly true etymology on the other. Mr Mill, as we should expect from a logician, is fully alive to the danger of mistake in reasoning, but not fully alive to the danger of mistake in etymology. *Justum*[1], he tells us, 'is a form of *jussum*, that which has been ordered.' The reason why it is well to be most cautious in moral reason-

[1] p. 69.

ing from etymology is that here at least we must 'drink deep, or taste not:' if we examine in that way any of our words, we must examine all of them. One would have thought here that Mr Mill's apparently casual use of the word *ordered* might have made him hesitate a little in his conclusion, that 'the generating idea of justice is the idea of legal constraint[1].' How is it that in requiring, as a part of law, that a thing should be done under some penalty, we use the word 'ordered'? Why do we call it 'ordering,' not 'forcing,' except that the essential idea of law is not *force*, but *order*? Of course Mr Mill might have avoided any difficulty which may arise to him from this word by saying for instance 'commanded,' though even here (in fact almost whatever word he uses), if he follows out his etymology, he will be led in the same direction. But laying aside this, what is the meaning of saying that *justum* is a form of *jussum*[2]? Has Mr Mill any reason for going to *jubeo*, rather than to *jus*, for the idea involved in *justum*? It does not seem to have occurred to him that we must have some clear principle, grammatical or philological, of the relative priority of words and forms, before we can reason from words to the deduction and derivation of the ideas which the words represent. The dictionaries give us *jubeo, command*, and certainly it is no difficult matter to conclude from this, if we care to do so, that all words of cognate root must have for their fundamental idea *commanding*. But if we had opened the dictionary at *jus*, we should have found it defined as a system of laws, a set of regulations as to mutual rights, an order of private rights and property; and there is no more reason, that I see,

[1] p. 71.

[2] *Justus* is of course derived immediately from *jus*, like *onustus*, *scelestus*, from *onus*, *scelus*.—Ed.

why we should deduce this from *jubeo* or *jussum*, than *jussum* from this[1]. I am aware that some of the Romans themselves did as Mr Mill has done here: in fact it is rather to the stage of etymology which such speculations represent that his reasoning here belongs[2].

The facts show that law is binding considered as the embodiment of reason rather than of force.

Any speculation on etymological grounds with respect to the order of ideas in reference to law and duty, though most interesting, is so exceedingly uncertain that it is safer to give little attention to it, and rather to look at the fact: and in this view it is to be said that the essence or main signification of 'law' is regulation, order, distribution, arrangement, and that the enforcement of this order by denunciations of penalty or sanctions upon the individuals subject to the law is, though real, only a secondary or subsidiary portion of law. The law taking effect among reasonable beings similar to those from whom it had its origin, the same reasons which determined its origin must be supposed to weigh with them in maintaining the observance of it: or if we like rather so to express it, law binds each successive generation not simply

[1] *Jubeo* is in fact derived by one of the most eminent of living etymologists from *jus habeo*, and *jus* is supposed to be connected with the root *ju*, to bind, Gr. ζεύγνυμι. See Corssen (*Krit. Beit.* p. 421, *Ausspr.* II. 50,) who compares *judex* (from *jus dico*) for the disappearance of the final *s*, and *prohibeo, debeo* (*prae-habeo, de-habeo*) for the contraction of *habeo*. The original meaning of *jubeo* he takes to be '*für Recht halten*,' and explains from this the usual construction of *jubeo* with a following accusative and infinitive. Mr Roby, to whom I am indebted for these references, gives me the following as his own view: 'I have come to the conclusion that the original root was *jor*. The *v* was hardened into *b* in the verb as in *bubile* for *bovile*: and the perfect *jussi* is a mistaken spelling for the older *jousi*. The Romans fancied the *b* of *jubeo* to be assimilated, whereas really the *v* was vocalised: *careo, causa, curo* form no bad parallel to *joreo* (*jubeo*), *jus, juro*.'—ED.

[2] The doctrine νόμῳ οὐ φύσει τὸ δίκαιον is common enough in both Greek and Roman writers, but I have not found any ancient authority for the etymology of *justus* which Mr Mill has given after Austin and Horne Tooke.—ED.

in virtue of the tradition of its original enactment, but the continued consent to it is a continued re-enactment. It is evident, both, that *that* is not law, but simple violence, which is made with no view, even mistaken, to the good of the society of which it is the law, and also that the real binding force of the law upon the mass of the society subject to it is not anything in the sanctions of the law, but is the consent given to it and the sympathy felt with it, unthinking indeed often and merely habitual, but still real. Law is the public reason of a society, participated in more or less by the mass of individuals, enforceable upon all who will not participate in it.

Duty, as obedience to a law, involves both these characteristics.

Duty, as I have said before, is moral or right action considered as obedience to a supposed law—obedience (as is the true character of obedience to law) in the first instance intelligent and consenting, in the second responsible. The former manner of obedience has no direct reference to the authority which is the guardian of the law: the mind of the framer of the law is sympathized with, but the care of the authority for its maintenance and enforcement is no matter of direct contemplation: the law is obeyed in its particulars in virtue of the same reason which directed the framing of it in its particulars: it is the name of a recognised system of rights and duties, the reason and force of which is in themselves. In the latter manner of obedience, it is not the reason of the law, but the fact that it is the law, that is looked to. And all this, which is the case with law, applies to duty, as obedience to the general moral law. The two manners of obedience are conjoined in human action: according to constitution and character, there is more of one or of the other. The essential principle of the former manner is something of submission, self-resignation, willingness to

accept direction: the essential principle of the latter is something of anxiety and fear. The submission and self-resignation of the former becomes in many cases noble self-devotion, whether to a cause or to individuals: duty is by no means necessarily regard to abstract law or right, it is regard to individuals or to societies to whom our duty is due, or whom we consider worthy of our service or our devotedness. And in respect of the latter manner of obedience, the feeling of responsibility may as naturally be elevating to the mind as lowering: it may give importance to our action without generating servile fear in regard of it. Both kinds of obedience are thus in their way good and even noble: the former the nobler and better.

Mr Mill's account of the historical growth of the idea of *jus*, a law of laws.

What we commonly understand by justice is that part of duty in which the manner of the action is most clear and the parties most definite, and in which most commonly actual human law has intervened to fix what should be done. Mr Mill has most ably classified the various kinds of justice. He has also given an account of the relation between human law and our notion of a general moral law. He considers law, as we have seen, to be that which is ordered or commanded under penalties; injustice he considers, in the first idea of it, to be disobedience to such law; afterwards men, from experience in making and changing laws, came to understand that existing laws might be bad laws, and so acquired the notion of 'laws which *ought* to exist[1],' whether or not they existed actually; and injustice came to mean disobedience to these. In this way men rose to the notion of a law of laws, or a superior and ideal law, different from any actual systems. The notion of a system of 'laws which

[1] *Util.* p. 70.

ought to exist' is a very good expression for what in fact is the Roman Stoic or philosophico-juristic notion of *jus*, that ideal law described so loftily by Cicero and after him by Hooker, in language which by Mr Austin[1] (and I should fear too many of Mr Mill's utilitarian friends would have been inclined to join with him) is called 'fustian.' Mr Mill describes the way in which he supposes men to have arrived at this notion. Whether this was the way in which they actually did so is a matter of history, and does not seem to me of philosophical importance. It requires development of human intelligence before the ideas, which either natively belong to it, or are immediately suggested to it, can take so much form and substance as to be recognisable and describable: and whether this is the particular manner in which the notion of *jus* or a law of laws took such form, I think is not of importance.

His description of 'laws which ought to exist' is inconsistent with utilitarianism:

But 'laws which ought to exist' is language I think not very utilitarian, nor in conformity with the view of law in general which Mr Mill gives here, and which utilitarians have in general very much taken to. The supposition of a set of 'laws which ought to be made' having such a definite existence in men's minds that the highly practical idea of injustice is determined and made clear by its apparent opposition to them, seems to me most alien to mere or genuine utilitarianism, and is in fact a recognition of what I have called the idea of duty. Surely if this is so, in order to the making better laws, we have got not only to systematize human happiness afresh in utilitarian fashion, but it must be worth our while to turn our attention to this law of laws, to inquire what people have actually thought of this, and to see whether there are not other ways

[1] *Jurisprudence*, I. 164.

of learning what it is, besides observing the tendency of actions to happiness.

and also with his own previous deduction of law from command.

Again: if, as is Mr Mill's view, we have no notion in the first instance of justice (which is surely the same idea as the idea of that which we ought to do) beyond that of conformity to law or command, how can we ever from this make the step to the notion, that one law *ought to be* rather than another? If the notion of 'command' goes before 'that which ought to be,' where is the command in virtue of which the laws which ought to be, ought to be? Mr Mill tries to rise above his Hobbesianism, and no wonder he should: but I do not think that logically he can.

CHAPTER X.

THE MORAL SENTIMENT IN ITS RELATION TO HAPPINESS, VIRTUE AND DUTY.

But without dwelling longer upon duty, I will proceed to speak of the relations of the three, happiness, virtue, and duty, to each other and to the moral sentiment.

In man as in animals there are two simply natural tendencies, (1) to the gratification of desire, (2) to activity.

The desire of happiness, if this is the language which we like to use, is the simply natural principle, which has nothing moral in it. It belongs to man in conjunction with all sentient beings: and it is the same in man as in animals, except in so far as by force of his reason it may be more systematic and methodical in the case of man. With them always, with him in the first instance, it is only obedience to present desire. And corresponding to this desire of happiness, there is in man (as in the animals) a merely natural tendency to activity or the use of his powers, which acts either for the gratification of desire or for resistance to hurt and opposition.

The moral ideas of happiness, virtue, and duty, are developed from these natural tendencies. Each of these three is needed

It is when upon the natural question, How shall I be happy or gain what I desire? there supervene the moral questions, What ought I to do? how may I live most worthily? how may I most promote the happiness of others? that the moral being of the man awakens. The two former questions are results or developments of the activity of his nature, the latter

to give moral value to actions.

of its desire of happiness. But they are not only results, they are ennoblements of this. In the moral nature of man these ideas or questions go together: and the ennoblement, or in other words the moralization[1], of the merely natural ideas and questions into these latter more elevated ones, arises much from the influence of one of these ideas upon another. Thus the merely natural question, What shall I do with myself? is raised into the moral questions, What ought I to do? what may I do most worthily? by the sight of others around us, by the feeling ourselves in society with them, by the entering into their wants through sympathy. In the same manner, the merely natural question, How may I promote my own happiness? is raised into the moral question, How may I be useful, or promote the general happiness? by the feeling that we have powers in us which need not be spent upon ourselves alone, and which are most worthily spent when *not* spent so; and that these powers are in many respects not our own, are not given us only for ourselves. The ideas of virtue and duty ennoble that of the desire for happiness, as the idea of usefulness ennobles that of mere activity.

Each is really assumed even by the philosophies which profess to be based exclusively on one.

Utilitarianism consists practically in making the most of the principle that action, for example, which is simply courageous and so far akin to virtue, is yet not good unless some happiness of somebody is subserved by it; as there is no moral value in a man's leaping into the sea to no purpose: and also that action, for example, which is simply *fair*, and so far akin to justice or duty, is yet not good unless happiness is on the whole increased and not diminished by it; as there is no moral value, but the contrary, in the return of evil for evil, by which

[1] See above, p. 60.

happiness is diminished, though it may be fair. In this the utilitarians are perfectly right: but they just satisfy themselves with one side of morality, leaving another clear to their adversaries, who with exactly the same reason may, and do, maintain against them, that an action which increases happiness is yet not good unless it has in it virtue, or duty, or both; that is, unless it has in it the due preference of others to ourselves, and amongst others, the due preference of those who have claim on us, (it may quite come up to the utilitarian requisite of being promotive of happiness, and yet have neither of these characters); and also that an action is not right, good, and worthy, as it should be, unless, besides its being actually promotive even of the proper happiness, the intention with which it is done includes more or less such promotion.

Utilitarians again have some reason in saying that their principle is tacitly assumed by their adversaries; that in reasoning, for instance, as to fairness and duty, the principle that happiness, whether general or particular, is the one good thing, the one thing which action is meant for and aimed at, is constantly in the minds of the arguers, and yet constantly kept out of sight. This is true in a measure; true exactly as it is true (in the way which we have seen) that utilitarians, when they say that the goodness of action consists in its tendency to happiness, mean, without saying it till they are obliged to do so, happiness rightly distributed, or in other words, *the* happiness which the agent ought to act for; and assume thus the principle of their adversaries, some in a greater and some in a less degree, just as their adversaries assume theirs. The reader will remember how in Mr Mill's papers, after right action has been defined as action conducive

to happiness, it comes out by degrees, when it cannot be helped, that the happiness meant must have been that which the supposed proof will not apply to,—happiness morally determined, or into which there enter, for the determination of it, considerations extraneous to happiness, namely, virtue and duty[1]. The worst is that the principle thus taught disguisedly on either side is likely to be taught wrongly. It is dragged in unwillingly in such a manner as least to come in the way of another principle supposed more important. This is one of the misfortunes which my essay is designed to meet.

Such an exclusive system may not lead to wrong results in practice, because the three principles coincide as to the line of action they point out, but in theory it is a false simplification.

Of these ideas then, virtue, duty, usefulness or conduciveness to happiness, I do not see the least how one can be resolved into another. They are various qualities of those actions which, speaking loosely, we call good, right, morally valuable: we have no reason, that I can see, to say that their goodness and rightness *consists* in one of these more than in another: if we wish to test their goodness or rightness, we cannot take one of these qualities to the exclusion of the others, but must take them, according to circumstances, in conjunction. We may know to a certain degree that they *must* point to one line of action in general, because human nature is one, and is reasonable, and reason is a common understanding among the individuals of the human race. The belief which we all must more or less entertain, that they are really and entirely, upon the whole, consistent, that they coincide as to the line of action which they point out, is in fact the belief that the moral universe is *one*, and good, and the work of reason and design; a belief which, when we dwell upon it, carries us, not very distinctly, but very deeply and

[1] See above, p. 86.

powerfully, towards ideas of religion. And in the mean time the various play or conflict of these ideas with each other, as exhibited within us and before us in the moral world and in human action, is what makes them of such unceasing interest to us: it serves no practical purpose, while it destroys a vast amount of moral and intellectual interest, to try to introduce false and narrow-minded simplifications. The attempt to grasp human action in one summary view is like trying to grasp water or to grasp Proteus—we only change the place and form of the difficulty. If we think it worth while to say, goodness of action consists in its conduciveness to happiness, we *really* do but change the difficulty to another as great, the investigation of the nature of that true happiness to which goodness of action must be conducive, instead of investigating goodness of action itself. The utilitarian notion that this happiness is simply pleasure, systematized as Bentham or others might systematize it, is what I have called an utterly false simplification.

As a matter of fact the moral question presents itself variously to men in one or other of these forms according to their different characters.

The moral question presents itself variously to men in one or other of these forms, and I do not see on what principle we can say that it does so better in one than in another. Our tendency may be to feel our action more or less free, more or less directed to a definite end. Where there is much initiative, much of energy and impulsiveness, the question is likely to suggest itself rather as that of *virtue*, How may I live most worthily? Where there is more of thoughtfulness and anxiety, fear of wrong as much as, or more than, impulse to right, there rises the question of *duty*, What *ought* I to do? And where there is more of a practical tendency, where there is a strong perception of sympathy with the want and suffering which there is about us, the question will rather be, How may I be most *useful*? what purpose,

of the many that are needed, shall I direct my action towards, and how may I best effect it?

It is no part of the business of moral philosophy to keep the thoughts as to the answer of these questions altogether in the same channel in which the questions arose. To determine what we ought to do we must consider all of them, and any exclusive consideration of one alone would be exceedingly false and misleading.

Each of the three ideas is attended by a moral sentiment, but the sentiment is most definite and imperative in the case of duty.

The moral sentiment or emotion, so to call it in general language, appears in different forms according to the form taken by the moral question, or in other words, according to the idea of moral action which most presents itself to the mind. It is the emotion connected with the idea of *duty* which we are most frequently in the habit of calling by the name 'moral sentiment,' 'moral faculty,' or 'conscience.' Our sight of injury done by one to another excites in us not only disapprobation of the doer, but also moral indignation, with desire to set the wrong right. The complicated feeling which we call conscience has for its most important element the reflection of this feeling in upon ourselves, and the judging ourselves in accordance with it. But, as an emotion, conscience is kindred to the emotions which accompany the idea of virtue, generosity, or magnanimity on the one side, and to those which accompany the idea of benevolence or philanthropy on the other. The pain which accompanies the consciousness on our part of past unworthy action or past unkindness is the same in kind (though in some respects less definite), as that which accompanies the consciousness of past failure in duty, the idea of which pain it is that leads to the moral idea of conscience. The difference in definiteness of this latter pain or feeling as compared with the others arises from the fact that what it sug-

gests to us is breach of *law:* it sets us before ourselves as guilty or offenders. While the voice equally of all the three forms of emotion is, I wish I had not done the thing, the voice of this in especial is besides, I *ought* not to have done it: and consequently, since conscience thus puts us in the position of offenders against the law, here there *does* come in that idea, which as I have said[1], is not the essence of law, but is a part of the notion of it, the idea, namely, of sanction and punishment. The vague fear of punishment which is involved in the notion of conscience arises just from the fact that sanction or the denunciation of penalty is understood (not as making the *essence* of the law, but yet) as being a probable, almost necessary, accompaniment of the law: hence though there be no knowledge of any sanction or penalty, yet when it is felt that the law in its reality has been disobeyed, it is felt also that a penalty has been incurred, and enforcement of the penalty is dreaded. Thus arises that sort of solemnity or majesty (the 'mystical character' in Mr Mill's language)[2] which attaches to the idea of duty. It appears as a kind of moral necessity, with the same sort of awe belonging to it: Wordsworth's Ode to Duty is in the same tone as Horace's to Necessity. It is in this way that the moral action of conscience is one of the most powerful suggesters possible of religion, and of a divine government of the world.

Remarkable blending of the sentiments of virtue and duty in certain cases.

The feeling of duty is constantly allied, in a manner strangely antagonistic and paradoxical but most intimate, with the feelings of virtue and generosity. The feeling of duty itself is, as I have said, one of restraint and submission; there is no reason for it except on the supposition of a possible tendency to transgress; prevention is a more intimate formal element of it

[1] See above, p. 152. [2] *Util.* p. 41.

than stimulus; wrong is the positive side in respect of it, right the secondary and negative. Just as pain is the more positive element of sensation, and a large part of pleasure consists in freedom from it; so wrong is the more immediate manner in which the action of man is likely to affect man, and a large part of duty is *neminem lædere*, to do no one any injury. Duty therefore in the idea of it is not expansive; it is rather strict and hard: yet in the worthier temperaments of mind the feeling of duty has a constant tendency to blend itself with that feeling of enterprizing freedom, almost self-willedness, which I have described as belonging to virtue[1]. From this blending it catches a life and a flame which carries it far beyond rule and may even give to it an enthusiastic character; as we see in the old chivalric idea of *devoir*, the very essence of which was the most complete spontaneousness and putting forth of individual force and will, joined at the same time with the feeling of the absolute impossibility of acting in any other way. The idea is of that which is expected of us, that which we are trusted to do (the trust reposing simply on an assumed estimate of our character), and, on the other side, of the wish to justify such expectation and trust. 'England expects every man to do his duty' is what we may call a noble truism. The idea of duty in those to whom this was addressed was—what England expected of them, and that was complete self-devotion of each in his particular assigned place and office. Our *endeavour*[2] is our utmost effort.

Not conscience only, but

The fear, vague or distinct, of punishment enters as I have said into the idea of conscience of

[1] See above, p. 111.

[2] That such was the original force of the word 'endeavour' (*devoir*) appears by the quotation from Cotgrave given in Richardson's Dictionary, '*endeavour=Fr. s'efforcer*, to strive with might and main, to use his utmost strength, apply all his vigour, use his whole power.' Ed.

wrong: but the moral feeling is worthier and nobler the less there is of this fear, and the more the wrong is felt in its own self and in its nature. In this latter case, the distinction between the pain of conscience and those pains akin to conscience, which attend the consciousness of conduct base or unkind, is very irregular and doubtful. The sentiment of shame is different from that of guilt, but still is constantly found in connexion with it: in a similar manner the sentiment of sorrow for pain caused or not relieved is different from that of guilt, but again is constantly joined with it. And the business of moral philosophy is not with the purely moral sentiment or conscience alone, but with the whole mass of feeling of this kind. The feeling, for instance, which we commonly call *honour*, is one of the most powerful influencers of human nature; it is what the morality of many of the best specimens of our nature will always depend on, and for many purposes it gives as good a foundation for morality as anything which we could call more definitely 'conscience' will furnish to us. And so with sympathy and kindness. All these feelings, beginning more or less as feelings of pain, pass into feelings of sensibility or discrimination: and thus they come to give us knowledge very much in the way in which our real senses do, discriminating with an *instantaneousness* and a *nicety*[1] which definite reason will try in vain to equal. It is true that these sensibilities are very far from being infallible guides: their suggestions, though pretty sure to be in the main right, are very likely to be in many details wrong; reason must halt after

shame, sorrow for pain inflicted, honour, sympathy, &c., serve to guide our moral action, and fall within the province of moral philosophy.

Reason should instruct them, but must not attempt to supersede them.

[1] I have ventured to substitute the italicized words for the words used in the MS., *certainty* and *accuracy*, as the latter taken in their common sense would hardly seem consistent with the sentence which follows, where the moral sensibilities are spoken of as being 'far from infallible guides.' ED.

them in the best way it can to correct and examine them. Still the mass of moral action is not done directly as a result of reason, but through the intervention of these, reason acting to inform and regulate them.

In order that these sensibilities may act as they should, there must be right ideas in the intellect of what is noble or excellent, of the details of moral duty, and also of the real conditions of man's happiness. We have here given to us, in the great heads, the work of moral philosophy. Utilitarians would tell us it is the last only we want to know, and that that will give the rest. But in reality we cannot know any one of them properly without taking into account the others.

Mr Mill's account of conscience is intuitivist.

The very interesting description of conscience which Mr Mill gives in p. 41, where he calls it 'a pain attendant on violation of duty' and describes its binding force as consisting in 'the existence of a mass of feeling opposing itself to the action,' seems to me, if anything is, intuitivist. Action is certainly not due in that case to the consideration of general happiness alone. It may be said however (and in some passages Mr Mill seems to take this view), that conscience is the result of education, which, by association and other means, works and transforms the external sanctions into an inward habit, and that the internal sanction is thus purely secondary and artificial. Let us consider how this is.

Examination of the supposition that conscience is a result of education:

The saying that the feeling of *guiltiness*, or vague dread of punishment for moral offence, is a result of the moral discipline to which all are more or less subjected in education, does not seem to me of importance, for this reason: because whatever is a regular, and (in a manner) uniform, result of that education which is necessary to make man man, to

civilize him and to bring out what of mind and feeling there is in him, is, according to the view which I take of his nature, a part of his nature. Of course besides this there may be certain specialties, certain feelings for instance superinduced upon him by education, which are no part of his nature, and which may be wrong: it is not always easy to distinguish between these two products of education; but still I suppose it may be done. The saying that conscience or the moral sentiment in man is a result of education, seems to me like saying that flying in birds is a result of education, because it does not appear to be done all at once, but there is a process of learning on the part of the young, and as it would appear, of instruction and aid on the part of the older ones. We may divide educability, if anyone cares to do so, into natural and unnatural; understanding the latter in reference to special kinds of training, such as are often practised by man on certain animals, as the teaching of birds to speak, of bears to dance, of dogs to perform various tricks, &c. which are plainly not developments of their proper nature: if then we understand the moral educability of man to be not of this latter, but of the former nature, (and I should think none could have any doubt on this point) it is the same to me whether we say that man has a moral nature or a morally educable one.

In the same way that some have considered that all moral sentiments are simply the results of education, so it has been often considered that conscience, honour, shame, and various similar feelings, are in reality only fear of others and of their opinion, and are not feelings really genuine, and arising in ourselves. The truth about this is that all our feelings, and our reason and thought also in an eminent

or that it is the fear of the opinion of others. This is only true so far as all our feeling and thought are social, just as we

think of truth as of a belief that belongs to all.

degree, are social; that is, there enters into them the imagination, more with one, less with another, of the sympathy of others with them. Man is social *in mind*, as well as in condition: sociality is involved in the very idea of intelligence, so far as we can form that idea: the supposition of the individual mind developing itself by its own observation and thought alone, which metaphysicians constantly make, is supposition only. Even knowledge itself is sympathy with the thought of others; it being essential to our notion of truth that, in the action of our reason in respect of it, we are thinking what others think and must think along with us. There is just as much reason then, and no more, to say that the intellectual supposition of anything being true is, not a conviction of our own minds, but simply a falling in with the common opinion, a coming to think as others do; as to say that, since in making the supposition of anything as worthy or right and what ought to be done we have undoubtedly a thought or imagination of the judgment of others, therefore this moral supposition is the giving up what is really our individual sentiment to fear of the judgment of others. Conscience or shame is not a simple imagination of the judgment of others condemning us, but it is a self-condemnation, involving with it, as I have said all our thoughts about anything *as true* do, an imagination of the judgment of others (if they knew what we know) condemning us also. Our judgments are formed indeed very much according to our education and the society in which we live: but the judgments thus formed are our own; the moral influence which governs our action is from within, imaginatively associating itself with the judgment of others about us; it does not simply consist in being influenced by others, by opinion or by reputation.

CHAPTER XI.

THE IDEAL ELEMENT IN MORALITY IN ITS RELATION TO THE POSITIVE AND OBSERVATIONAL.

Positive and ideal elements in human morality.

It is the characteristic of human morality that in the nature of it there are two elements mixed: the positive or given, and the ideal: the simply natural founded on impulse alone, and the rationally natural founded on principle and imagination. We speak of what we *should* do in contradistinction to various things which otherwise we must be supposed inclined to do. Thus at the basis of all our moral action, whether in respect to the action of individuals, or in respect to that legislation and establishing of customs which we might call the collective action of mankind, must lie the feeling that there is something to be striven after and something to be striven against; in other words, that the right action of man is a kind of action which will be the result of principle and effort, not that which first and directly presents itself and is most immediately what we may call natural.

The supposition of an ideal is essential to moral philosophy.

In using here the word 'ideal' I have no wish to prejudge what may be found to be the kind of conduct to which the expressions belonging to this ideal, such as rightness, valuableness, fitness, goodness, &c. actually apply. But an ideal in some form there must be, if we are to have moral philosophy at all. Men act in all sorts of ways

as a matter of fact, each acting from an individual will of his own. Moral philosophy goes on the supposition that there is for them a way of acting (one way, we will suppose) which is better than others; and this not prudentially better only, as we might suppose in regard of any set of animals, and as in fact the individuals of each set of animals to a certain limited extent suppose for themselves. Man in virtue of his free-will, reason, and imagination, forms an ideal of his action: what moral philosophy seeks to find and to recommend, as the guide of individual action, is the best ideal for the action of the human race.

The essence of the moral ideal is the recognition of the double nature of man and of the necessity of self-conquest.

Whatever particular form the moral ideal may take, the essence of it must still be the same, namely, the feeling that right action for man is not simple, but that for individual improvement and elevation there must be self-conquest, and for general improvement and progress self-devotion of individuals; in other words, that there is a natural or physical course of action which moral action is to rise above; that thus no moral theory which treats of human nature as simple, which does not notice this conflict of two elements in it, can be complete.

Where this doubleness is not recognized, an ideal may be made of physical improvement including moral improvement as subsidiary.

It may be that moral science has no power to convey to those who refuse to admit it this notion of the doubleness or multiplicity of man's nature, the notion, that is, of there being present to him the idea of something which he would be and do, besides the consciousness of what he actually is. In the absence of this notion, a sort of ideal may be formed of a better physical condition: advance towards this may be looked upon as improvement: increase of dispositions which are likely to produce such improvement may be looked upon as improvement also, in virtue of their tendency to lead to

the other. It seems to me that this notion, which is to a certain extent that of utilitarianism, refutes itself in the supposition. Man cannot attain to any important improvement in his physical condition, without the development in him of a mass of social dispositions which amount to an important moral improvement likewise. What takes place thus in regard of him is that he becomes a higher animal, a being of more worth, a better creature. And why in this case the moral change should be considered improvement only because it helps (or tends to help) the improvement in condition, I do not see. The moral change is *itself* an improvement, as much as the physical change. If it is admitted that it is in itself an improvement, but only because it is itself happiness and carries along with it a happiness of its own, over and above that which it produces as its result; this is to sacrifice altogether the notion of happiness being in such a manner definable as that improvement may be known by its tendency to produce happiness. If we are to apply to any purpose the principle, that moral improvement is the increase of the dispositions which tend to happiness, we must keep the notion of happiness clear in the first instance from that of moral improvement, which is to be determined by it. If moral improvement is *itself* happiness, the idea of happiness is extended in such a manner as to be no longer of any value for the application of the utilitarian principle.

But such a view of moral improvement is self-contradictory.

Against non-idealism then or true positivism, which does nothing to determine action, which looks upon man as a part of existing nature, and upon any change which there has been or may be in him as a part of that course, development, or progress, which may, for all that we know, be going

Utilitarianism idealizes happiness against positivism; why does it not carry its idealism further?

on in organized nature altogether—against this, utilitarianism, refusing to admit any upward tendency or moral ideal, any *aspiringness* in human nature, would, where it has anything of enthusiasm and life in it, endeavour to idealize human happiness. The question has to be asked of it, Why does it go so far, or why, going so far, does it not go further? Why is it not satisfied with man as he is, or why, if dissatisfied, does it not find more to be dissatisfied with than his want of happiness?

It is not in the view of happiness, solely or chiefly, that we need be dissatisfied with man as he is.

If we look at man as he is, we need not be altogether dissatisfied about him: if we look at his past history we may feel an interest in other points besides his change or progress: he has been at all times 'a noble animal,' and different contingencies of his history have brought out, to an endless extent, one and another point of interest about him. He has his place in the creation with other sentient beings, of suffering and enjoyment, labour and ease, mixed together: his life is at least not harder than that of other animals, in respect of which impartial nature, in proportion to the facility of procuring food, has generally provided abundance of enemies, and in proportion to the freedom from attack by others, has made difficulty of self-sustenance: even the difficulties of his life make a part of his life, and add to its interest. So much is this the case, that it is exceedingly doubtful how far man in general, if the choice were offered him, would give up the changes and chances of life as it is, with the hopes and fears attending them, for any more methodical and quiet scheme of happiness, such as Mr Mill to a certain extent gives in these papers. We need not then be altogether dissatisfied with human life as it is.

The idealizing tendency in

Still, that man is and has always been dissatisfied, is a fact, and one most honourable to his nature: with

the free view which reason gives him he not only sees what he is, but thinks what he might be. But, naturally and reasonably, if he is thus disposed to idealize, it is not with respect to his happiness only, but to his whole nature. That upon the whole he has as much happiness as he deserves, he is pretty well aware, feeling as he does how very much more of happiness at each moment lies in his power than he actually appropriates. Life indeed, in the point of view of happiness, must always offer to him a scene of terrible perplexity, for the fearful vicissitudes and possible calamities of it are of course to the highly developed sensitiveness and full consciousness of man something which has no parallel with inferior animal natures. But the feeling which leads to that aspiration and worthy idealism which has always existed in man, is not merely a discontent, so to call it, of human nature with its present amount of happiness: it is the thought of man being to a considerable extent the master and guardian of his own nature and destinies, and the imaginative anxiety, with much of fear in it but much more of hopefulness, which such a thought will bring with it. The real way in which man may be happier is by that general elevation and improvement of his nature, which will both render him capable of more happiness, and will carry with it more happiness, than his nature now admits of: and this sort of change is the ideal which, so far as he is disposed to idealize, man naturally sets before himself.

man acts in other ways besides elevating the idea of happiness.

Utilitarianism, in so far as it represents the old Epicureanism or attachment to happiness as enjoyment, has little of an ideal character: but besides this it more or less represents the notion of action being aimed at an end or supreme good, and also in its best forms may incorporate the notion that the happiness

The new utilitarianism does carry its idealism further, but is inconsistent in doing so.

of others, or of man in general, is to be sought rather than our own. As representing or incorporating these notions, utilitarianism might be ideal to any degree: the idea of the supreme good might be a most lofty and exalted one, and so might the idea of the sacrifice of ourselves for others. Utilitarianism however, while taking its idealism from these sources, does not follow it out to the extent demanded by the spirit which it thus appropriates. The saying that by the supreme good is intended happiness, and by happiness pleasure, and the saying again that self-devotion or unselfishness is to be an equal distribution of our action for happiness amongst all possible recipients, ourselves included, give us an ideal which is not worth having, and which would not have been thought of, if the utilitarian teachers had not been better than their philosophical principles. The man in whose mind the sentiment was real and fundamental, that happiness in the sense of pleasure was the one thing desirable in life, would be very little led to thoughts of the improvement of the condition of human nature, and to dreams of a happier state of man which, by wise conduct, might be brought about. 'Carpe diem' is far more genuine Epicurean morality than any such thought of future increase of happiness for man as would lead to toil and effort in the present. In reality, there is doubtless in many calling themselves utilitarians the strongest possible feeling of the obligation upon them to do what they can to improve the condition of man, and not only a willingness but an earnest desire to sacrifice to this task anything which otherwise they might care for. But why, with their own nature thus in all its parts exalted, as such forgetfulness of self and of mere enjoyment must exalt it, will they refuse to recognize as of value in

the case of others what is of so much value in their own case, and why will they idealize nothing as to man but his enjoyment? Why will they not look forward to man being *better* as well as happier, and consider the former an improvement, not only as contributing to the latter, but also as being equally and independently desirable for its own sake?

Duty, virtue, and happiness are independent forms of the moral ideal.

My complaint against utilitarianism has been, it will be remembered, all along, that, being partial, it claims to be all that is needed for morals. Otherwise the moral ideal is likely to suggest itself differently to different people, and I scarcely know any principle upon which we can determine any one form of it to be more absolutely true than another, each being wrong if it claims to be all. We must not idealize moral action exclusively under the notion of duty, as if it were necessary to the rightness of it that it should be done as under pressure, with the ever present consciousness of law, and with the view (religiously, but not morally, proper for all action) that there can be nothing in it of free self-origination and consequently of deserving. But yet duty is the form in which moral action will idealize itself in many minds, where there is more inward call for regulation, and less disposition to initiative: and I do not know on what principle we can say that this is a better, or a worse, form of the moral ideal than that of free virtue and self devotion. Only there must be more or less of both forms: and of the remarkable manner in which they may practically unite, I have before spoken[1]. And so happiness nobly and worthily conceived, not as mere enjoyment, but as one view or side of a state of being in harmony with itself, fulfilling its purposes, using powers to ends worthy of them, desiring, and more or less attaining, and resting in,

[1] See above, p. 165.

the really desirable,—happiness looked upon as what human nature may be more or less brought towards, is a most noble ideal, and one most eminently conducive to moral action: but even thus, it must not condemn the other ideals.

The moral ideal must be filled up from experience, but it is not derived from it.

The moral ideal, whatever its form, is suggested to man partly by fact, and partly by something which is not fact nor conclusion from fact. There is given to man, as I have so often said, man individual and man collective, a double nature, a something which he is, and a something which he would be. The former of these as life goes on, life individual or life of mankind, becomes more intellectually clear to the view: and as it does this, it may serve very greatly to realise and animate the latter: but for the latter to be capable of this, it must have had its own native and independent origin. This latter nature or manner of life, the nature wished for and approved, may be very barren of *content*, as logicians would say, independently of the experience of the former, the actual nature, which time brings with it: but the notion of it is a mental fact nevertheless, and the one great fact which it behoves ethical science to take notice of.

Illustration from the successive expansions of the utilitarian ideal.

To illustrate the manner in which the one nature, so to call it, is filled up from the other, we may take Mr Mill's utilitarianism and observe in this the successive forms or expansions of the moral ideal of our action. The first step is the supposing an ideal at all, and this at once removes ethics from the category of the simply positive or inductive sciences, to which no such supposition belongs. The next is the giving for content, or filling up, to this ideal the imagination of a happiness beyond our own, the happiness of others or the general happiness. Then, when we imagine the world of moral beings with their various

claims and their various feelings, we come to idealize both the happiness and the generality of it: we imagine not only a desirable manner of life, which we may call happiness, but a desirable kind of happiness, however we may name it; and also a desirable distribution of the happiness, or relation of the happiness of one individual to another.

Though physical science, once partly ideal, has become positive, the fact or necessary assumption of free-will excludes positivism from moral science.

Observation and induction are possible and necessary as to every step of this progress or development, but they are not possible to such an extent as to make the science of ethics a positive one, in the manner in which, for example, astronomy is. It is true that almost all science had in its origin a more or less ideal character, which we have now, as regards the mass of science, given up for a positive one: but the very notion of ethical science precludes such a treatment *there*. What I mean is this: Plato and others like him formed vast ideas of what the heavens ought to be, what was beautiful for them and what worthy of the Creator, and had a very strong disposition to consider that the facts must accord with these ideas of theirs. Notions of this kind we have now given up, though in sciences which deal with organization it is possible that something of the kind, in the form of imagination of purpose, may still be scientifically fruitful. But in any case the science of the direction of our own action, of which we feel ourselves masters, is not a positive one, (that is, a science simply of the discovery of matter of fact,) except so far as our feelings of self-direction and self-mastership are delusions: that is, it is not a positive science as *ethics*. It is a science about something supposed absent and future, not something present or past. What I mean by ethics or moral science (whether we call it a science or not) is that *kind of thought* which there must

always be in relation to our action as supposed free and the result of conscious self-direction; for in this manner man, whatever he may come to know, must of necessity act. Nor can the place of ethics, in this sense, be taken by any positive science of mental physiology, which may trace the nervous connexion of sensations and following actions, and so give to our actions the apparent character of physical necessity. This kind of necessity, like every kind of it supposed in reference to our action, must always remain extraneous to practice, and the science of the direction of our action must exist unaffected by it. Our free will is at least an assumption which we must always make, as we do that of the reality of our being and of the external world about us.

Yet observation is needed for each stage of the development of the ideal.

But while ethics cannot be in the first instance a science of observation, because all that observation can do is to show us how it is *prudent* to act, while it can never suggest to us anything as what we should do, what we ought to do, what is fit or proper to do, what is improvement of ourselves or others; all which notions belong to an ideal region, or go beyond what is present;—yet there is abundant scope and necessity for observation in reference to every step of the development of the moral ideal given above. The supposing an ideal at all is in fact little more than the full consciousness of ourselves as active beings or beings with powers: and it is matter of most important observation what those powers are. Accordingly, what may be wanting in a man may be any consciousness at all of this kind; that is, he may never have waked at all to the consciousness of himself as a moral being, with much of power for good and evil, and correspondent responsibility: here is the ideal element wanting. On the other hand it may be observation which is wanting;

a man may be full of mistake about himself, may think he can do what he cannot, and think he likes what he finds he does not like. And what is true of an individual holds also in regard of larger portions of the human race. So again for the second step, that of the thought or idea of the happiness, there needs much observation as to what this happiness is: so for justice: and also in estimating the different characters or qualities of happiness, in a subsidiary degree observation may do very much.

It will be said, If observation cannot *give* us the ideal, why should we consider that it can *aid* it? how can we fit the imagining what should be, and the observing what is, together?

As subsidiary therefore to moral science and its ideal, we want positive sciences of *hedonics* and of social phenomena.

The fitting them together must always be imperfect, and it is for this reason that I would wish to mark clearly the distinction between the main science (or manner of thought) of ethics and the subordinate sciences which aid it and in applying which lies its chief concern. These sciences offer abundant room for observation, but only within a limited range: in going beyond this range they become complicated and lose their simplicity. One such science we may call *hedonics*, or the science of human pleasure. No one can doubt the importance and the value of observation as to this, observation both of our own feelings and of those of others. And we may doubtless, to a certain extent, proceed in a methodical manner with such observations, and general principles or laws about human pleasure may in this manner be arrived at. But while this may be called, as it seems to me, one of the sub-sciences of ethics, the proper business of ethics is to determine in respect to our action how we are to use the knowledge which we thus possess about pleasure. For such a science of 'hedonics'

can tell us nothing as to whether it is our own pleasure we should consult, or that of others; and whether that of each other alike, or with various respects and considerations: and other points of this kind. Such 'hedonic' knowledge would be valuable even in a system of ethics which, on ascetic principles, considered that pleasure was in no respect a thing to be indulged in, but was to be restrained and disciplined.

In the same manner as to 'hedonics,' great ethical interest must attach to a historical science of social organization, or to methodized observation of the manner in which man does arrange himself as to property and mutual rights and duties. In this as in other respects, without our knowing what is, our imagination of what ought to be must be mere dreaming; while yet the knowing what is does not simply tell us what ought to be.

CHAPTER XII.

MORAL IMPERATIVENESS AS BASED UPON PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS.

The relation of moralized to unmoralized human nature.

It was stated in the last chapter that the notion of contest, choice, and effort enters into our notion of morality as human. How great is the effort to be? How different is moralized human nature to be from human nature unmoralized and as it is a subject of simple observation? This is the fundamental question of ethics, and it is because people have not set this clearly before them, that there have been strange confusions and unnatural sympathies between quite distinct lines of ethical thought, as between religious notions of the corruption of human nature, and notions like those of Hobbes and La Rochefoucault about the depravity of man; no attention being given to the fact that the former assume that man *should* and (under certain circumstances) *may* become something quite different from this corrupted nature, whereas the latter make no such supposition.

Religion and imaginative ethics, starting from the ideal side, set the two states in strong opposition.

In reality this question is the same as the question how far we admit an ideal of our action and consider the practical power of human reason and will to extend. Ethics armed with divine authority, as when incorporated in religion, may demand of our effort to be almost infinite, and may make the improved human nature very different indeed from the merely natural. Ethics again of a highly imaginative

character, as in Plato, may set before us, as what human sociality should be, something entirely different from anything that the world has hitherto had experience of. Ethics more practically, but not so poetically, imaginative as this (witness the Stoic) may denounce the *simply* natural as no *human* naturalness, and may require that life, short of the full attainment of the higher naturalness, should be a scene of perpetual conscious effort and forcedness. All these, and others like them, start from the ideal side, and in some of them there is an evident shipwreck against the positive and natural. Other ethical philosophers again try to start from this latter side, with no idea of effort or of a better and a worse human nature. They assume perhaps some undoubted positive principle of human nature, as Epicurus that which is badly expressed as 'the love of pleasure,' and think that this can be expanded into an entire system of morality; or like many modern moralists they set their science before them as one of simply psychological investigation. As there was much of noble thought in the others, so there is sure to be much of interesting and perhaps valuable knowledge flowing from the researches of these: but as there was a difficulty, in the former case, how to make the ideal views and the positive facts come together (and the most practical philosophies of the ideal kind, like the Stoic, seemed to shew that they were *not* brought together rightly), so in the latter case, there is the difficulty to which I have already referred, of making the step from the positive to the ideal, from what is to what should be, from the indicative to the imperative mood.

The philosophies which start from the positive side find it hard to rise to the ideal at all.

The development however of the ideal or imperative from the positive and indicative is evidently more possible in the way of psychological investiga-

The psychological moralists have partially suc-

tion than it is in the way of simple investigation of man's condition and circumstances; and psychological moralists have attempted it in various manners. Thus Bishop Butler finds in our nature something evidently important, which yet is nothing if not authoritative and imperative, which can do nothing but command; hence he concludes, on the principle of nothing being made in vain, that it must be right in commanding, and that we are therefore bound to obey. In this respect he starts from what I have called the positive side, and looks upon morality rather as a product of human nature, than as something imposed or enjoined upon it. He discovers in human nature itself a true lord of its actions in this *conscience;* finding here a real *authority,* but one subject to great doubtfulness as to its nature,—what is the *law* by which it is regulated or accompanied? for some law it must have to distinguish it from mere caprice. And this being so, it is with this law that morality is more concerned than with conscience, which is only the faculty of applying the law: and for this law it is beyond human nature itself that we must look. But Butler's view in this respect is subject to another doubtfulness besides: what is our notion, according to it, of the difference between the moralized and unmoralized, the better and the worse, human nature? Butler's view suggests that moral action consists essentially in obedience to conscience; but, inasmuch as conscience belongs to every state and stage of human nature, quite as important a constituent of it is that the conscience should be an improved and instructed one. And if we suppose *much* such improvement possible and desirable, the inference clearly is that *previously* to this the conscience is very likely to tell wrong, and can therefore only have a very qualified

ceeded in developing the ideal from the positive, as Butler in his account of the imperativeness of *conscience;* but he omits the consideration that it is only the faculty of applying a law imposed from without;

and that it is liable to mislead unless rightly instructed.

authority. I have mentioned that Bishop Butler's view of the nature of the obedience due to conscience[1] is partly the Platonic notion, that in disobeying conscience (or reason) we fall into mental anarchy, which from the nature of things must be the worst of evils (a notion full of truth, but more naturally perhaps suggesting itself to a Greek than to us): and it is partly the notion that morality consists in doing consciously and by choice that which the different parts of a machine (as a watch) do unconsciously, viz. in admitting regulation of ourselves and each part of ourselves by that which has for its intended business such regulation. Either of these notions may fairly be conceived to meet the idea of *authority*, though of course the former does so the most, and though the notion of the moral authority being thus within ourselves does not seem to me to be the truest or the best.

Other psychological moralists make *reason*, not *conscience*, the source of moral imperativeness.

All psychologists do not, like Butler, find in man a special faculty of conscience or moral reason; but all of course find *reason*, and some consider, that there is an imperativeness or authority about such suggestions of reason, in reference to our action, as are evidently unquestionable and indubitable. In reality however in all this, whether we speak psychologically, as of the suggestions of our reason, or whether, what comes to the same thing, we speak objectively, as of moral truth, and of its analogy to mathematical, we are still met by the great difficulty as to the deduction of the ideal from the positive. In relation to morality, there is fact according to which we are to act, and fact according to which we are not to act: the notion of *improvement* is manifestly of a non-compliance with fact in some particulars: we are to follow some

[1] See above, p. 114.

dispositions, and resist others. The notions of truth of fact and of rightness or goodness are analogous, but the notion of truth of fact is the inferior one, and morality has to deal with the other.

But morality is in some respects unreasonable.

We must not therefore forget, that morality is in some respects the *unreasonable:* that when the imperativeness or authority of it is felt, though there is carried conviction to the mind of a reasonableness in it, it is, as it were, a far off or higher reasonableness, complicated with other feeling, difficult to plead and to produce. The *primâ facie* unreasonableness of morality or goodness as the deliberate choice of any, and the long and laborious process by which the thoughts must be elevated to see the real reasonableness of it, is well exhibited in Plato's *Republic,* where the former is brought out in the strongest manner before the consideration of the latter is commenced.

Ambiguity of the term 'reasonable.'

It is hard to see, as a matter of simple reason, how we are to say whether it is more reasonable to take care of ourselves, or to take an equal care of each living being, ourselves included, or to take care of the whole public body (whatever we may consider it) without any special thought of ourselves, or what besides[1]. The *primâ facie* judgment of mankind, or what some moralists are pleased to appeal to as common sense, seems to say the first: Mr Mill, as we have seen, gives the second: while moralists have usually given the third in some form, as that which is in the highest sense reasonable.

Illustration from Mr Mill's system: is the reasonable the correction of the ideal

The fact is, that the words 'reason' and 'reasonable' are of very ambiguous application in this respect: reasonable action being such as is directed in reference to what we perceive, know, or think, and there being very great possibility of difference as to

[1] See the Appendix to this chapter.

by the positive, or of the positive by the ideal *f*

the *manner* of this direction. For example, Mr Mill argues that happiness, or the pleasant, is what all men *do* desire, and hence apparently that it must be, or should be, the scope and aim of action: we do think happiness the valuable thing: therefore we ought to do so[1]. But again, Mr Mill lays down that our effort to produce happiness should be in equal measure for each whom our action can affect (so I understand Mr Mill's expression 'whom it may concern'), ourselves no more than others[2]. Now supposing this to be a thing which men ought to think, it is certainly not a thing in respect of which it can be proved that they ought to think it from the fact that they do. To teach them to think it, though it might be right, would not be easy. We are here in the difficulty I mentioned above. Is 'the reasonable' what we *do* think, or what we *ought to* think? Is 'the reasonable' the correction of the positive by the ideal, or of the ideal by the positive? We may suppose objectors, from two different points of view, to the doctrines which I have referred to Mr Mill as maintaining: which will have the more reason? In reference to the saying that pleasure is what men *do* value, the one might object, "Yes, but it is the business of morality to teach them to value something else more:" while in reference to the saying that men are evidently, in all reason, equal units, and therefore our action should be no more for the happiness of one than for that of another, the other from the opposite point of view might object: "Yes, but as a matter of fact, I do value and care for myself, and my own happiness, more than for that of others: and if the fact of man's valuing pleasure or happiness proves the principle of utility, the fact of man's specially

[1] See above, p. 63, &c.

[2] See above, p. 89, &c.

valuing *his own* happiness must be accepted in proof of a philosophy of selfishness."

In treating of happiness Mr Mill follows one principle, in treating of the general happiness the other.

I do not dispute Mr Mill's being right in noticing both man's natural value for happiness and the value which he may come to have for fairness in his action as between himself and others. I have already said that I do not look on his account of fairness, or right distribution of action, as a good one, nor upon his account of what men value in the way of happiness or pleasure as a good or complete one; but I recognize both as things which should have account given of them. My complaint is that he argues along two different lines of thought without at all telling us why at one moment he is *following* man's action, at another *mending* it: why he accepts man's value for happiness or pleasure as the fact upon which moral philosophy should be built, and which proves the proper form of such philosophy to be the utilitarian; and yet refuses to accept, as equally authoritative, the equally undoubted fact of man's special value for *his own* pleasure, requiring *this* natural principle to be corrected by notions (we will say) of the higher reason, by the notion, for instance, of fairness, of equality of one with another, &c. If we allow the *former* fact, like the latter, to need correction by higher views, we have no longer utilitarianism, that is, the idea of happiness as the only thing valuable: if we accept the latter fact, like the former, as natural, necessary, and needing no correction, we have simple Epicureanism. Mr Mill's different course of proceeding in his dealings with the two facts upon which his philanthropic utilitarianism is built seems to me, so far as the philosophy of it goes, entirely arbitrary.

Reason of itself will no more

If then we are looking psychologically for moral imperativeness or authority, and think we find it in

than conscience explain moral imperativeness: it must be *right* reason or reason *rightly* applied.

reason, we have to recognize a fact analogous to that which met us about conscience; namely that it is not reason itself, but the information, so to call it, of which it is the organ, which is the force really acting upon us; that it has no authority at all as *reason*, but simply as *right* reason; and then there is to be considered what is the nature of the authority which, as such, it possesses. Whatever reason gives us information of must be, in some manner, fact: and here again we are met, even in the highest regions of thought, by the old difficulty of judging what *should be* from what *is*. Or if by reason we mean not knowledge, but judgment; it must go upon principles; and what are those principles to be? When Aristotle tells us that right reason, or the judgment of the wise man, is to fix the particular point between two opposite vices, at which the corresponding virtue resides; upon what principles is this reason to judge? With him it seems hardly to judge otherwise than by the common opinion of men, and common use of words. But what ethics ought somehow to tell us, is *how* reason should apply the information it possesses, in order to be able to judge what *should* be done. How are we to use the materials of judgment, such as the opinion of men, the expectation of this or that pleasure, the knowledge of this or that fact or relation?

Reason is morally imperative in two ways, both imperfect; (1) as a supposed mental necessity, (2) as an overwhelming sense of desirableness.

Such imperativeness as there is in reason in relation to action is of two kinds, very different, of which two kinds we have had a hint in the two lines of reasoning which I have just referred to in Mr Mill's papers. The one is a supposition of a moral imperativeness analogous to the intellectual necessity of believing what we are convinced of. The other is a supposition of understood desirableness existing to such an extent as to amount to more than urgency,

in fact to a sort of felt impossibility that anything else should be done. When phrases like 'the morality of reason' are used, they have generally reference to the former of these notions. But the morality of consequences, which is of the latter kind, is a morality of reason as much as the other, and has really, if not verbally, been put forward as such by most utilitarian writers as against emotionalists. The imperativeness, it will be seen, is in either case imperfect. The analogy in the former case is not one which very readily commends itself. Whether people can believe a lie, knowing it to be one, may be an intellectual question; but that they can readily do wrong, knowing it to be wrong, is no question, and to call it a moral solecism is not very significant. And in this latter case, however the notion of understood desirableness and the notion of imperativeness or necessity *tend* to meet, it is clear that they never actually do. The condition, 'if you would have...', 'or else...' may be so evident and important as to vanish from expression, but it does not really vanish from thought.

The one belongs to the morality of rule, the other to the morality of end: the one contemplates an ideal *present order*, the other an ideal *future condition*.

These two suppositions belong each to a wider region of moral thought, the former to that of the morality of rule, the latter to that of the morality of end or purpose. It is hardly possible for any moralists, whatever they profess, to help taking account of both of these. Mr Mill[1] blames Kant and the philosophers of *rule* for assuming, without acknowledgment, the supposedly utilitarian principle that all actions are done with a view to happiness, and in the same manner he, as we have seen, assumes (equally without reason given) that action for happiness is to be divided according to a rule of equality among the beings susceptible of happiness. The nature of the force or

[1] *Util.* p. 5, 77.

stress upon us to act according to the Supreme Rule of Human Action, whether it is penalty, in which case the morality of rule tends to resolve itself into that of consequences, or whether it is the quasi-intellectual evidentness of the rule, does not generally distinctly appear. In the same manner in the very notion of acting for an end is implied choice of that end; necessity or real imperativeness of the end is denied. In each case what is left and clear is that which I have called *an ideal*, an ideal *present order*, or an ideal *future condition*, according to which, or in furtherance of which, our action is directed.

These two moralities are not really opposed.

Reason as it contemplates the relations of things, and reason as it anticipates probable consequences, would be called by some by different names. It is this which has caused much confusion in arguments on the subject. The two manners of its action, or what is equivalent to them, may both be recognized in a system of morality. *Right* is the word which corresponds to reason: it is that which is right to be done which reason enables us to find, or (if it is *right* or unmistaken itself) finds for us. And what we find may be that the right thing to be done in the first instance is to promote the general happiness, and then in the second instance that the right thing to be done, in order to this happiness, is such and such a particular thing. Here are two steps or kinds of the action of reason, but quite consistent with each other. Systems of morality may recognize these two steps separately, may mix them more or less confusedly together, or may recognize only one of them, applying it also more or less widely. But the morality of rule and of end, of duty and of consequences, are not necessarily inconsistent with, and contra-distinguished from, each other: rightness may be eternal and unchangeable, and yet *consequences*, in the way

of happiness, may be what should determine at least many particulars of it.

In fact these two forms of morality, whose endless jar makes up so large a portion of ethical controversy, seem both to have their places in a proper ethical system; and both have in fact a place in many systems where only one of them is professedly admitted. Both too have their special importance. The morality of duty or rightness has the far stronger imperativeness and the far greater distinctness; an ideal rule or order carrying by the nature of it much more force upon our action than an ideal conception of a future condition, or end which we wish to bring about. On the other hand the morality of consequences has the far wider applicability, and is what, in the main, details must be guided by. And the imperativeness in each case is due to that which I have called 'ideality.' So far therefore, as in our psychological search after *imperativeness* or authority, we find it in *reason*, it must be a reason bearing in it very much of the character of imagination, as in fact all the higher reason does. The suggestion to our minds of a moral order of which we form a part, or of a better moral condition which we may make for ourselves, amounts in fact to an imperativeness in this respect, that we are aware of a failing or coming short on our part if we neglect to act upon the suggestion; which feeling is in reality also a feeling of demerit or preparedness for penalty, under circumstances where penalty is likely to be thought of. The ideal suggestion to our minds of a future desirable result (as the general happiness) which we may do something to bring about, carries with it less of imperativeness; but it may carry with it even more *urgency* than the other,

Both have their place in a perfect ethical system.

Each of them derives its imperativeness from the ideal which it contains.

an urgency which may take very much the character of imperativeness.

So much for the nature and character of the imperativeness or moral authority of *reason* in the mind.

But it is from the emotional rather than from the intellectual part of our nature that we can obtain a psychological explanation of moral imperativeness, if we take this in the sense of *urgency* rather than *authority*.

The felt imperativeness of moral duty is not an irresistibleness, though it is something like it: it is a felt urgency and incumbency which may be, and very constantly is, resisted, but the resistance to which is accompanied with a peculiar regret, which we call pain of conscience. The psychologic attempts to analyse it all more or less treat it as *irresistibleness*. When we say it belongs to our reason, we explain this, as I have just shown, either by comparing it with the irresistible force of demonstration (or rational intuition) on the intellect, or with the almost irresistible force put upon the will by an end all desirable. But practically there is more of the character of irresistibleness in what we may call moral sensibility than in moral judgment, and in this way there is a more ready psychologic explanation of moral imperativeness by a reference of it to the *emotional* part of the mind than to the *intellectual*. The feelings, not well described in modern ethics by the rather cold term of the 'benevolent' feelings, such as affection, love, pity, act constantly with force almost irresistible, and are in this respect *imperative* in the highest degree. While however this reference better explains the *force* of moral judgment or feeling than the reference of it to reason, it does not answer well to the sort of notion of *authority* which we associate with it. The right thing is perhaps more sure to be done under the influence of kindly emotion than from any conviction of reason; but in idea and on the whole we want human moral action to be raised above the character of following simply on impulse and affectionate feeling,

as is the case with the action of many of the lower animals. Kindly affection is the only form of morals for them, and raises them up towards man, but in man there should be this, and something more. We do not want men to be always thinking of what they should do, but we want them to be *able* to think of it.

Morality is really the correction of the simply natural feelings by the cultivation of sympathy in combination with reason.

I do not know that morality can be described better than as being, in its main and great character, the correction of that inevitable self-regard, which is our first and most immediate feeling, by the cultivation and expansion of those feelings (equally native and real, but less immediate) which constitute kindly regard for others, and by their combination with reason, from which combination flows justice. Then, as the subordinate character of morality, we require self-cultivation in order to prudence and self-control, without which fit action according to the kindly feeling is not possible.

The term 'moral sense,' which has been applied to this combination, does not help to explain the facts.

The development of moral judgment and moral sensibility, conjointly, has been considered by many moralists as the operation of a moral sense. They have thought by this use of words to explain the felt imperativeness, and the discriminateness or *settledness*, with which moral notions present themselves to the mind. In reality the term 'moral sense' leaves the moral question where it found it. It does nothing to explain whether morality is an expansion of kindly feeling or of felt duty; or, supposing that it involves both, (and few will doubt that it does,) how we may best exhibit it, and which of the two we should take to start it.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XII.[1]

On the adjustment between Self-regard and Regard for Others.

Unsatisfactory adjustments proposed by (1) Paley, who makes the happiness of self the end; and (2) Mr Mill, who equalizes self and others, thus losing the force that comes from action for self and for the lesser spheres surrounding self.

That the consulting the happiness of others as distinguished from exclusive care for our own is the main part of morality, all philosophers are agreed. And they are agreed also that here there is work for morality to do; that here there is something to be taught. The notion involved in the name 'utilitarianism' is, that what needs to be taught is greater value for happiness, and greater care in the consideration of what constitutes it. But in reality what needs to be taught is, a better adjustment than our *immediate* or lower nature gives of the relation between our thought for the happiness of others and our thought for our own. Our own happiness we feel immediately: the happiness of others we may be said to feel in a manner naturally, by sympathy; but we do not do so simply and immediately. *Reason* is in doubt as to the adjustment here, because it is in doubt as to the principle or axiom to go upon. What is laid down by Mr Mill as reason or common sense is, that the happiness of each moral being, ourselves included, should be consulted in equal measure: what is laid down as the same by Paley is, that each moral being should act for his own real and final happiness. The reader will perhaps observe here a failure, on the part of each writer, to consider whether he is describing fact or exhibiting an ideal: Mr Mill gives a distorted picture of what is ideally right: Paley treats what is more or less fact as if it were ideal, giving to what *is* (viz. the exclusive regard for our own happiness) the character of what *should be*, instead of considering it as what morality may correct. The actual or

[1] In the Author's MS these paragraphs form part of the concluding chapter. It seemed to me that they would be more conveniently introduced here in illustration of the preceding argument. See above, p. 187. Ed.

immediately natural is self-regard, tempered in various ways by feelings of kindliness, of fairness, and of generosity. The ideal is public spirit, not *entirely* lifting the mind off the original ground of self-regard, but giving to so much of the self-regard as remains such largeness and elevation as is an aid to public spirit and general welfare, not a hindrance. Mr Mill's ideal man with his equal regard for each, himself included, would be, if we may venture to say so, too unselfish; he would not be weighted enough to adhere to earth. At the basis of economical society, and as a condition of its vigorous action, must lie the strong impulse upon men to work for themselves, to make their own way, position, and importance. With this, according to the elevation of their nature, will be more or less of the feeling that it is not themselves only, but society, that they are serving. And with it too will be all that semi-selfishness which, when not overdone, is the best bond of public spirit: regard for family, order, class, friends, country, till we come to mankind.

Human nature itself thus makes the adjustment between self and society to a certain degree, and it is not for morality, from its ideal ground, to overlook this being so.

The former may be called the positive, the latter the ideal, morality of reason. The true adjustment lies in the combination of both with emotion.

We may call by the name of the *positive* morality of reason that which considers that it is our own happiness which must be our own object, because there is nothing else which can be desirable for us. And we may call by the name of the *ideal* morality of reason the change of our moral view from being thus self-centred to entire impartiality as between self and others. The former of these standing-points, the reader may remember, Mr Mill takes when he is finding proofs for utilitarianism: the latter is the notion of equal distribution of our action for happiness, which he subsequently introduces into utilitarianism as a part of it. In reality the adjustment, in our view, between self and society is made by an adjustment or meeting of these two views as to what is reasonable, an adjustment very loose and irregular, but real. When we compare man's nature with that of the animals, we see at once that he ought not to be, while in reason superior to them, yet in groundwork and purpose of reason only equal to them,—merely self-regarding: his reason should extend his purpose as well as his means, should make him independently value the happiness of others, as well as

understand it. Reason is a deindividualizing faculty, because the truth which intellectually it concerns, and the rightness which it concerns morally, are in themselves the same for one as for another. But reason in man is not pure and abstract: it can never entirely remove from him his animality, which gives to it certain particular data, and impresses certain particular conditions upon it. For with this is connected not only the self-care which may work against the abstract reason, but also the complicated variety of emotion, which, though in certain particulars it may work against it, in far more, as against this very self-care, is its most powerful ally. The adjustment, as I have said, is irregular; for the feeling in some cases fails, in some overshoots its mark: but still not only are the irregularities of emotion to be corrected by reason, but the mere abstract reason, independent of man, is to be humanized by consideration of man's circumstances and nature.

CHAPTER XIII.

MORAL IMPERATIVENESS AS BASED UPON IDEALITY OR BELIEF IN HIGHER FACT.

I HAVE called the appeal to human consciousness in any form, in reference to the foundation of ethics, by the name of the psychological manner of moral investigation: and I think it may appear, from what has been said about this, that there is a double difficulty; first, the finding out exactly what it is that is thought and felt, and next, the great doubt or difficulty as to whether any appeals to, or investigation of, our consciousness can give us an account of the *fact* of the imperativeness of duty. Supposing the nativeness or innateness of our conscientious feeling to be demonstrated against those who would consider that any such feeling was an accident of human nature, a result of artificial education and training; what follows on this demonstration of its nativeness? It is not more native than self-regard and much of impulse; and though, on Butler's principle, the manner in which it criticizes these (especially impulse) may imply a superiority in nature over them, yet still, since we see that all that is native is not necessarily right, can we be certain that in this conscientious feeling we have arrived at the highest rightness, and that *it* may not be judged by something else in its turn? Let our moral sense be as native and genuine a sense as can be conceived, still

General difficulty of explaining moral imperativeness from psychology. Even if conscience is an innate sense, that does not prove its authority; and to what order of sensation is it compared?

on which stage, on which level, is our action according to it to be placed, on the popular and sensible, or the philosophical and intellectual? I mean by the former of these stages, that on which we judge, by inevitable necessity, that we are surrounded by a real external world of sights and sounds and solid beings, and by the second stage that on which we analyse what we mean by sight and sound and solidity, and endeavour to find out how it is that thought and knowledge of this kind is suggested to us. Is moral truth evident to us in the simple and popular manner in which what we may call truth of the senses is? Do we see a thing to be right as we see a body to be red or square? And if it is so, how is it that moral sensation does not result in that same sort of common understanding and uniform manner of action among men which their simpler physical sensation results in? Or does moral truth belong to the higher stage? It must do so, if our notion of it is that which rises highest in us in judging the other portions of our being: in that case no sensation which can be judged or tested, only the highest internal sensation or intuition, must be allowed to go for anything; and how are we to know when we have arrived at this?

The fact of human improvement forbids the notion of a merely positive science of morality.

This rather abstruse matter may be stated simply enough thus: if we merely take man *as he is,* what is the meaning or use of morality? and if we are to correct him or make him *what he should be,* how are we possibly to know when we have got the proper notion of 'what he should be'? Is morality simply a positive science of anthropology, hitherto mistakenly involved with various notions either of vain metaphysics or of conventional superficiality, or is it anything more?

The answer which I have endeavoured to give to

this question amounts in fact to this, that a true anthropology cannot be a positive science only, on account of man being a changing, improving, and educable being: that it must involve therefore an idea of 'ought' as well as of fact, of 'should be' as well as of 'is,' and that therefore, however ideas belonging to what we will for a moment call philosophy may yield in other sciences to (supposedly) truer notions of matter of fact, here they will not. This non-positive element in such an anthropology I have called 'idealism,' by way of an exceedingly general name; and I hope what I mean by it will be judged by the explanations I have given of it, and by a reference to the ancient philosophical uses of the term 'idea,' and not by reference to its various uses in modern times.

Still the idea of 'that which should be' refers to an existing reality. Morality may be considered as an imagination on our part of the thought and will of a superior being: when we act rightly, the thought of the superior being in us directs the inferior.

But though the idea of that which *should be* does not belong to the region of the things which *are* in the way of sensible existence; still it certainly has reference to something as being or existing, to a reality which we may conceive more real—real in a higher sense—than anything which our senses perceive. How it comes to pass that everything possessed of sensible existence is viewed by us (as it undoubtedly is) with a reference to this higher reality, so that we predicate of it goodness or badness, rightness or wrongness, is a philosophical mystery which philosophers, especially Plato, have variously illustrated. Religion partly, not entirely, belongs to this region of thought: God *is*, in a sense in which 'that which should be,' the ideally good or perfect, is not: but this good actually determines the will of God (as it ought to do that of all beings capable of morality), and therefore, though not independent of Him, it is not simply a result of His existence. And all morality which is more

than positive anthropology, or examination of what man actually has been and is, has in it something of the character of religion. If we think of that which should be, and consider at the same time that the mind and the will of God are according to this, we are in point of fact trying to imagine what it is that He thinks and wills. And I do not know that we can have a better notion of morality than as the imagination, on our part, of the thought and will of a better and superior being. If there can be men better than men, there may be angels better than men, and God better than all. And as we may bring ourselves to think the thoughts, and will the will, of a better man than ourselves, and so to do his actions, so we may do this in some degree in respect of supposed beings altogether superior to us. And morality, in one aspect of it at least, is certainly this. There is a doubleness of mental movement in it, which in some respects is represented better in this way than in any other. When we do a worthy action, we are better than ourselves, we conquer something in ourselves, we rise above something in ourselves, the thought of the superior being in us directs the inferior. I hardly know any clearer way of describing the nature of justice, and the meaning of social or public-spirited action, than saying that it is acting in an inferior position with the thought and range of view of a superior one; acting as a subject from the point of view of the governor, whose care is the general good. And *generosity*, which is usually necessary as a road to the higher benevolence and justice, is just this shifting of our point of view from the immediately natural, from that which in a certain sense belongs to us, to that which may be said to belong to our own ideal nature and to beings superior to ourselves. In this respect there is

sŏme morăl̆ity possible for the inferior being which is not possible for the superior; even generosity is a virtue of struggle, acquiring its meaning and value from a temptation to the contrary, though there is in it that mixture, hard to follow, of a feeling of fulness and freedom and triumph to which I have already alluded[1].

In order then to establish morality on the basis of psychologic investigation, we must be able to find in the mind two sorts of dispositions, the one sort having the character of being better and worthier than the other, such as we can imagine belonging to beings superior to ourselves, while the other sort is what we see or imagine as belonging to beings which are inferior. Thus amongst brutes we know that public spirit is, speaking generally, impossible, on account of the limitation of understanding. But morality, before it comes to particulars, is the acting by many as one, and the subordination of each individuality to public purpose: thus, as to purpose or end, the action is social or public, while, as to conscience and conviction, it is individual and private. It is the action of an individual mind which can and does incorporate the general interests with its own; the action, as it were, of a true governor or superior being. We have an example of this in case of danger on shipboard, where all may depend on each individual being able for the time to act as it were with the mind of the captain, whose care is the safety of all: each rises above himself, and above the merely natural prompting towards exclusive self-regard, to take equal thought for others and the whole.

Each individual thus comes to think as a true governor might do, of the interest of all, instead of his own particular interest.

I think that the feeling which really lies at the root of conscience or moral sense consists in this attribution of greater worthiness and goodness to

It is not so much positive goodness as the attribution

[1] See above, p. 165.

of superiority to certain dispositions, implied in self-condemnation, which shows man to be a moral being.

certain dispositions; and that if moralists had better understood this, some confusion would have been spared. Psychologic investigation has been devoted to the search after a human goodness; and on the finding of this, it has been supposed, the question, Is morality a real thing or not? depends. It should have been remembered, that a feeling on the part of men of condemnation of such badness as there is, is quite as much, or more, what it is wanted to find. The moralists who have taken pleasure in representing human nature in an odious light have, by the very fact of their doing so, borne as much witness to man's condemnation of himself in this character, to the notion in him of something different which he would rather be, and hitherto perhaps has more or less thought himself, as they have done to the fact of the existence of the bad feelings which they detect. And this self-condemnation shows man to be a moral being quite as much, if in a different way, as any native unconscious goodness. Any notion of himself, on the part of man, as bad or imperfect bears witness of an ideal in him of goodness and perfectness.

Explanation of the idea of responsibility as regards our rising to the higher nature.

But if morality be thus ideal; if it is the effort to superinduce a better nature upon a worse or lower, the development of the former by society and education, and the imagination, on our part, of the thought and will of better natures without us,—what is the meaning of *responsibility* in regard of it? and how, though there may be merit in our rising to the higher nature, is there demerit, wrong, or punishableness in our remaining in the lower nature?

It appears to me, that in regard of this idea, 'can' and 'ought' go together in the mind. Whatever of good we *can* be, we *ought* to be. The perfectness of state, which the idea aims at, involves both

goodness and happiness. In this point of view therefore punishableness, so far as the notion of it attaches to our following the worse course, is not a legal or jural idea, but means the risk of missing or losing what it would be well for us to have: in keeping ourselves in the worse and lower state, we fail of happiness as well as of goodness.

It is partly the danger of losing the higher happiness:

The notion of both the great ancient philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, is of an ideally perfect individual life, which therefore must be both good and happy. Of these two features of it, however, the first has been recognized in all moral controversy as the more important. That is to say, many moralists, as Plato, have set themselves to make out that without goodness happiness is impossible, and they have generally in doing this taken the analogy of *disease*, and asked, Is it possible that the soul can be happy, which is diseased, scarred, and wounded with vice? On the other hand, no philosophers have ever maintained that goodness is impossible without happiness. No doubt the perfectness of an assumed ideal state has been often challenged on the ground of its defective happiness: such was the line of argument constantly maintained against the Stoics, who considered that the heavenly bodies were animated and were perfect deities, and also that their wise man, though apparently no better off than any one else, was always perfectly happy: under these circumstances the ceaseless movement of the former, and the non-exemption of the latter from the ordinary troubles of life, gave occasion for constant ridicule against the Stoic notions of divinity and perfection. But still it has been generally felt that goodness enters much more intimately than happiness into every ideal of perfection. What Plato and moralists like him in all ages have endeavoured to make out may be described as being this, If you are good

from the love of goodness, happiness will follow (goodness for the sake of the happiness not being *bonâ fide* goodness); and if you are not good from this love, happiness is impossible. And goodness, as we have seen, is the acting in the manner in which a better being than ourselves would act, if, in speaking of *ourselves*, we think of that which is often the *first* to come into our thoughts and to tempt us, and which, generalized, forms much of the foundation of human life, as it actually exists. Our nature therefore is in a manner put upon an acclivity; to gain our happiness we must strive upwards, and raise ourselves as it were above ourselves: the punishment of failing to do so is the failing itself, in its character of loss of much which might be our happiness.

partly the imagination of an ideal moral society to which we belong and to the laws of which we are bound.

Ideas however of responsibility or punishment go beyond ourselves, and do not properly belong to that view of morals which has reference to a higher and a lower nature. Our imagination not only sets before us ideal natures superior to our own, but it sets before us an ideal moral society. It is thus that right conduct is *ideally* imperative upon us, just as obedience to the laws of the human society in which we live is *actually* so. This latter obedience has more than one hold, so to call it, upon us: there is, first, a certain amount of participation in, and consent with, such laws, from our perception of their reason and meaning; secondly, our feeling how necessary and useful it is to the society that laws should be observed; and finally, our dread of the penalty imposed. In corresponding ways the moral law is *ideally* imperative; first of all, from a sympathy with it, a perception of its reason and meaning, (which perception has in it something, widely speaking, of an utilitarian character, that is, it is perception of the *good* of the law, though such *good* is not simply happiness in

the sense of pleasure); next, from the feeling how important it is that there should be general laws of human observance (a feeling which morality cannot be without, though it is a feeling on which too much is built by utilitarian writers); and finally, from the dread of punishment.

In speaking thus however am I not allowing that man is simply what he is, like any other animal, and that the notion of himself as good or bad, the notions of duty, virtue, responsibility, and others, are suggested by human laws and their accompanying penalties, are in fact a mere result of society and education; this society having for its source nothing moral in man, but that same desire of security and mutual cooperation which we witness to a certain degree in other animals[1]?

This is not the same as saying that our moral ideas are a mere result of society and education.

On this it is to be observed, that there is this great difference between man and other animals, viz. that these notions *do* become formed. If any one cares to say that man *is not* a moral being, but *makes himself* so, that he *is not* ideal and improvable but *makes himself* so before he improves, let him by all means say so. It is man's nature then so to make himself: that association which in wolves or beavers is fruitful no further than to the catching a common prey, or building a common abode, is in *him* fruitful to the generation in his mind of all those ideas which we have spoken of, which make him quite a different sort of creature from what he would be without them, namely, a moral and self-improving creature. The saying that moral ideas (as for instance the idea of *punishableness* in respect of wrong) come by education, sets the question, as I have already observed, in no different light from that in which it was before. I should say in bad Latin, *Nihil in educatione quod*

It is at any rate distinctive of man's nature that he is not only capable of this development but regularly and naturally receives it, so that the educated man is the typical or natural man.

[1] See above, p. 168.

non prius in capacitate. If we prefer saying 'man is educable to morality' to saying 'he is a moral being,' let us do so; provided only we understand, as is the fact, that this education with man in society is universal; that it has in no respect the appearance of an accidental training, as of dogs to point or fetch, but rather that of a regular or intended development of nature.

Any *universal* or regular result of education must be considered to have a basis beyond education itself. In other words, if we find anything which man by education regularly becomes, any feeling which by education is regularly developed in him, *that* is what man most truly *is*, and that feeling is what is most *properly* natural to him. Brutes are born with their intellectual and moral nature, such as it is, made for them or developed uniformly and most rapidly; when they are in society with man, there is much strange exception, or rather addition, to this; and he, man, the superior nature, has power to produce strange modification in their inferior natures by special training. But man has in a manner to make his intellectual and moral self, and the specialty of the nature which God has given him is this power. I speak of man collective; in respect to man individual, what I say will be, that we must look to *educated man* for what corresponds to the natural or *untrained brute* animal.

Even though it should be proved that our feeling of moral responsibility is developed under the influence of society from very

The force or point of the saying, that the feeling of moral responsibility is a result of education and society, lies in the supposition that education and society are superfluities or accidents of human nature, which man might be without, and still be worthy to be called man. Let us say, if we will, that man regularly (for it is regularly, if not universally) makes himself, in feeling, morally responsible,

or comes regularly to think himself so. Every inference of the reality of the *fact* of moral responsibility or punishableness from the existence of the *feeling* of it will hold as well with the feeling stated in this form as in any other: that is, it will hold to the full extent of that region of thought within which we may conclude from *any* feeling, sentiment, or sensation of ours to the existence of a corresponding fact. Whatever of importance we learn, we come *by degrees* to learn: and the final idea is something exceedingly different from anything apparently or distinctly contained in the steps of the learning; and hence it is always competent to philosophy to say, that we introduce in the process a vast deal of our own,—a consideration which, according to the philosophy, takes various forms; one form being, that the result is not warranted. Our idea of the prospect before our eyes, which we call perhaps a perception of a number of different objects in an expanse of space, is something extraordinarily different from the various titillations of the optic nerve, and shiftings of the axis of the eye, and movements of the limbs, and corrected misjudgments of all kinds, which are the complicated materials from which is built up the above apparently simple piece of observation. What philosophic warrant we may have for seeing things as we do, and whether they really *are* as we see them, may be a matter for philosophers to discuss; but, in any case, our seeing them as we do is not a matter of accident or convention: *some* fact, even in the abstractest and abstrusest region of reality, must correspond to it and give reason for it. Let it be granted then even that we owe the notion of our moral responsibility to the fact of our having been brought up in an actual society and made to feel our responsibility *there*, and

incongruous elements, still we have no reason to question its validity, for all our perceptions are formed in the same way.

that this actual society has owed its origin to no sort of feeling of moral desirableness, but only to fear or expediency, or motives similar to these; why is the regular feeling of a rightful punishableness, attaching to us (even without denounced punishment) in the event of our doing certain actions which we call wrong, to be considered a vain and visionary feeling because it is generated from elements apparently discordant from it, any more than other particulars of our thought and knowledge; for instance our conception, just alluded to, of the prospect before us? The feeling may tell us little as to the *particulars* of our moral responsibility, who it is that we are responsible to: but it may be accepted as telling us that we *are* responsible[1].

But in fact it is a main *constituent* of society as well as a *result* of it. Different forms of this moral idea.

But this is not the *real* ground upon which the question should be placed, because the idea, which makes itself thus distinct at the *end* of these processes of education, has in truth been at work all along them. Man can only be taught, irregularities and exceptions apart, to see that which it is his nature to see; he cannot be educated except to that for which he is educable. The notion of moral responsibility,

[1] Mr Mill, though maintaining that the moral feelings are not innate but acquired (p. 44), and appearing sometimes to deny the existence of any original moral element in the final moral idea, as in his derivation of virtue from self-interest (pp. 53, 54) and of the idea of duty or justice from that of penal sanction, yet strongly upholds the validity of the moral feelings in their final development. Thus, speaking of the conscientious feelings of mankind, he says (p. 42), 'The feelings exist, a fact in human nature, the reality of which, and the great power with which they are capable of acting on those in whom they have been duly cultivated, are proved by experience:' and, in p. 44, 'If the moral feelings are acquired, they are not for that reason less natural. It is natural to man, to speak, to reason, to build cities, to cultivate the ground, though these are acquired faculties. Like the other acquired capacities, the moral faculty, if not a part of our nature, is a natural outgrowth from it; capable like them in a certain small degree of springing up spontaneously; and susceptible of being brought by cultivation to a high degree of development.' Ed.

which is in fact the imagination of a moral society of which we are members, is in its less developed form a main *constituent* of the formation of societies, as in its more developed it is a *result* of them. It is a feeling without which man evidently does not, and cannot, rise to any self-improvement. The feeling 'wrong must lead to harm' is a feeling in some particulars like, in some unlike, that of 'mistake of means must lead, so far, to failure of end.' Wrong is failure in the *general means* to good, and harm is failure as to the *general end*. It is the anticipation of the incidence of the harm upon the agent himself, along what we may call some *moral* course, which makes the fact of moral responsibility. The manner of the incidence thus dreaded is very various, according to the comparative nobleness of nature of the agent himself. Where this nobleness is great, the sight of the incidence of the harm on others would be the heaviest incidence of it on the agent himself, and any actual punishment on himself would be a relief from such sight. In such a nature the feeling of responsibility is the thought, not of what may happen to the man himself, but rather of the importance of what he does, and dread of the harm he may do or of the loss of the good which he may fail to do. The feeling again may be more abstract and general, or may be more definite and personal, having reference to a superior: and as directed to the superior it may be of every kind, from love without dread to dread without love. The simple fear of punishment, the lowest of all the many forms, arises when the agent anticipates harm to himself from some superior supposed to be interested in the guardianship of the law, while he himself is not so interested.

Again society supposes more or less of mutual Besides the idea of

responsibility, education in society developes in us the idea of acting for the happiness of others, and of yielding to the will of others imagined worthier than ourselves.

attachment, and a certain amount of obedience. I have said that goodness may be described as the thinking the thoughts and feeling the feelings of a supposed superior being: besides this, it is more or less also the subjugation of our own nature to such a being: it has in some respects the character of *obedience*. In many points of view, the two notions are not far remote from each other. The rising above ourselves, and the obeying what is imagined worthier than ourselves, have that same kind of relation which I have before alluded to in speaking of the manner in which the notion of duty and of most perfect freedom of action unite themselves together in the best natures[1], so that the action in regard of which there is the strongest feeling on the part of the agent that he could not possibly help doing it, is at the same time the action which is done with the most force of individual will. Morality is the correcting of self-regard, whether this self-regard be in the way of interest, or in the way of opinion; that is, it is the cultivation of care for the happiness of others as well as for our own, and also of care for the will or wish of others as well as for our own: we have in some measure to forget both our own will, and our own happiness. This must be something more than mere complaisance or readiness to obey, which in itself has very little moral value: we have to yield our wills to that which *ought* to be yielded to, and study to promote such happiness as *ought* to be promoted. And this 'ought' is the great point of morality, the ideal which we have spoken so much of. Education in society thus developes in us the idea, not only of responsibility, but more generally, both of acting with a view to others as well as to ourselves, and of yielding our will to that of others, that is, of obedience.

[1] See above, p. 165.

And this latter feeling in its successive steps of moral force and elevation, whether as deference, or as obedience, or as self-devotion, is good and of moral value in *itself*, independently of the consideration of the happiness which it tends to produce. Had it no tendency to produce anything or to make any change, it would still be good. Reason has to seek not only what ends it may best work for, but where it may most worthily submit itself and obey.

Something, it is to be said, of a *religious* character mixes itself with morality, in all cases where the idea of moral responsibility or conscience comes in. I will therefore end this chapter here, and speak shortly in the next about the relation of morals to religion.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE RELATION OF MORALS TO RELIGION.

Mischiefs arising from the divorce of morals and religion.

WHEREVER the consideration of morality is divorced from that of religion, as is a good deal the case at the present time, moral philosophy has a tendency to lose all its depth and earnestness, and to become simply a matter of literature, and religion to lose half at least of its power over minds of any activity of thought and feeling. If moral philosophy is only criticism, and religion only dogma, to what are we to look for the direction of human life? The most important region of thought and knowledge to man, whenever any thought is stirring, is that which concerns his own life and character. Whether we *can* know much about this or not is doubtful, but at least we are always wanting to know: and it is when religion or morality, or both united, grapple with *this* subject that they command attention and exert real influence, not necessarily at the moment (for constantly the most empty things have that sort of influence), but in moulding opinion for the future. The subject both of moral philosophy and of religion is human life as it is and as it should be. And vast as this subject is in the view of moral philosophy, it is vaster still in that of religion, which expands indefinitely before our imagination the ideas both of the moral universe and of human duration. When we take account of the

information furnished us by religion, we are creatures distinctly of a far longer span of being than we should otherwise know ourselves to be, and members of a far wider, though unseen, moral society. Yet it is good that moral philosophy should exist as a science or manner of thought separately from religion, though not properly independently of it, or at least not in a form inconsistent with true views of it: for, religious opinions being very various in the world and likely to continue so, moral philosophy may both furnish a ground of common understanding where religion fails to do this, and also may help to show which is the more true among different forms of religion. But religion cannot exist at all, in any influential form, without incorporating into itself a vast mass of thought which belongs properly to moral philosophy.

Moral philosophy however, if it be good and earnest, yearns after religion when it is separated from it; and it is this which, from some points of view, may cause a well-founded dread lest it should make a religion for itself, neglecting considerations which ought then to be introduced. The religion so made is rather defective than actually wrong, if the moral philosophy which makes it be true and elevated.

Religion contemplates a future state, and presents to man moral objects to worship.

By religion, in the most general sense of it, I mean the having more or less the idea of a future state for man, and also of the existence of one or more moral beings, not the ordinary subjects of sensible experience, with whom nevertheless man may have moral relations, and whom (or some of whom) he may worship. Morality at once leads to the imagination or anticipation of such a wider moral world, and its anticipations, so far as reason may be considered to justify them, make what we call

natural religion: revealed religion confirms and adds to this. As there has been in the world an abundance of mistaken moral or natural religion, so there has been an abundance also of superstition and idolatry wrongly supposed to have been communicated to man's knowledge.

In the ancient world worship being without morality was inevitably separated from religious, or moral, thought.

This superstition however would rarely have been what it has been, so little a benefit to men, so much an injury, if it had not been in general disjoined from all moral considerations. Owing to this, whatever grains there were in it of truth, and of value for man's nature, failed and disappeared. In all the later times of the pagan world there may be said to have been two religions, the moral religion of the philosophers, entirely wanting in the element of worship, and the popular *worship*, more true in this respect to the notion of religion, but quite wanting in morality. The religious *thought* of the ancient world is to be found in its moralists (as in Plato) wanting however in that which, if the traditional religion had been better than it was, it might have looked for *there*, namely, reverence and worship, the notion of actual mental communication with that higher moral world the idea of which was conceived and developed.

Revealed religion and morality may each learn from the other.

The endeavour to keep the religious thought, which moral reflexion generates, in harmony with a system of worship so false as was the old Pagan, may have been really impracticable and undesirable. Even the task of keeping such thought in harmony with a system of worship as true as we have reason to believe our own, is not altogether easy, and yet it is a most necessary task, and one of which the value ought to be recognized from both sides. Morality and revealed religion ought to help to commend each other to us. Their disagreement is an argument

against both, weakening the force of the reasoning or sentiment upon which we receive the one, and of the testimony on which we receive the other. This consideration is important against the summary manner in which we are occasionally inclined to lay down a principle taken from the one or the other side, and to say, All must yield to this. For instance, it may be asserted that all we have to do is to satisfy ourselves of the exact bearing and force of the testimony given to certain facts, and then to believe, without caring whether what we thus believe recommends itself to us on moral grounds. Or the course taken may be just the opposite; we may overdo our moral anticipations, as we may overdo the possible force of testimony in proving things relating to religion. Morality has much to learn from revelation supported by testimony, and it seems to me that the best morality is likely to be the readiest to feel and acknowledge this. But morality will not submit to learn everything from what professes itself such a revelation: one thing at least it must feel as given it by God, viz. its conviction of what is right and true; and this it has no right to abdicate in favour of what can at any rate have no higher credentials.

Revelation then and human moral feeling have to meet; as soon as we try to make one of the two absolute over the other, we are really beginning that divorce of them which I have deprecated. They may both live on after such a divorce: we may have on the one side a dogmatic religion caring for nothing but acknowledgment and obedience, though associating itself not unfrequently, in temperaments disposed to devotion and contemplation, with much of genuine and worthy worship; and we may have on the other side a speculative religious morality absorbing every disposition to religious thought, but

Where they are divorced, religion degenerates into dogma, and morality (if it is not distinctly irreligious) loses its practical power and is apt to become mere literature and criticism.

losing all hold on positive belief and with it all power of influencing masses of men, and all tendency to worship or do any definite service to the Divine Being who is thought about. . Besides these, we shall of course very likely have a moral philosophy which is simply literature and criticism, without any care or effort to *direct* life; and a moral philosophy also which shall aspire to direct life, but in opposition to whatever can really be called religion. Against these wrong views, can we not succeed in giving to moral philosophy its proper place and its own ground, allowing it *here* an independent stand even against what may profess itself religion, and in this way securing for what is really religion its support and not its opposition? Can we not understand how religion is not only strengthened but infinitely animated and realized by moral philosophy, and how moral philosophy itself, which without religion presents to us so many paths speedily barred and dark before our investigation (if indeed we pass beyond literature and criticism to such effort), is supplemented by religion, and a way opened for us to new fields of truth, of reality, and of goodness?

A true moral philosophy suggests questions and creates wants which only religion can satisfy.

The thought which belongs to a true moral philosophy inevitably leads to the asking many questions which only religion can answer. And it leads to what we may call the formation of a number of moral wants which only religion can satisfy. Independently of religion, that is, independently of any distinct reference on man's part to God as acting, I believe, under certain reservations which will appear further on, the improvement of human nature to be a most real and possible thing, as a result of moral consideration and of knowledge. And I believe that man's condition upon earth, under reasonable circumstances of civilization and improvement, is to be

considered on the whole a good or happy one, so far as we are able, by comparison, to give a meaning to such an expression. But it is impossible to contemplate human improvement and human happiness without seeing that, whatever may have been done, there is much not done, but still wanting, in regard of them. I think the moral idealist who is not a mere visionary is the person of all others most likely to be drawn towards religious notions by a feeling of the impossibility that something of the kind, some such notions, should *not* be. It must every now and then strike him as almost nonsense or profanation to speak of improvement in view of the vice and wickedness constantly before him, or of this life being a happy one in view of its manifold and continual forms of suffering. But if he has got in his mind the ideas of goodness and happiness as that which should or ought to be, which is much the same as the idea of man being intended for something, and not merely, as a matter of fact, existing like a leaf or a stone; then he cannot but imagine, anticipate, already (we may say) in some particulars have come to know, the news which revelation may bring him of a wider sphere of moral existence of which this is a portion. No person who has seriously thought about moral philosophy can expect from it a real solution of the difficulties and perplexities of human life. But it may help him to see more clearly the nature of these and to think more wisely about them, and (if he is willing to go on so far) I think it will help to direct his way to where such solution as is apparently possible on earth may be found.

Even without religion morality has a value of its own.

The reader will see that I have no disposition to sacrifice morality to the necessity and importance of religion, that is, to argue for the necessity and truth of religion from the (supposed) fact that morality

without it, is impossible, wrong, or absurd. Morality without religion is unsatisfactory, insufficient for human expectations and human wants: but it is not valueless; and in the absence of religion it has nobly served mankind. It both points us towards religion and in the mean time, if it is earnest, helps us from itself.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE POSITION OF UTILITARIANISM IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY.

[THUS far we have been occupied with a general review of Mr Mill's neo-utilitarianism, pointing out in what respects his system differs from other forms of utilitarianism, and examining at length the proof which he offers for it, and the main points of the system itself, viz. the account which it gives of happiness and pleasure, of virtue, duty and the moral sentiment. On each of these points the author has set his own view by the side of that which he controverts, and particularly in the later chapters he has endeavoured to explain the source of the imperativeness of morality, and has shown how it is connected with considerations of religion. The subject of the present chapter is the history of utilitarianism; the chapters which follow contain an examination of the claims which it puts forward on other grounds than those of scientific proof. One such claim is its Practical Character, another its supposed connexion with the Inductive Method and with the Philosophy of Progress in general[1].]

General recapitulation.

I shall endeavour in this chapter to show how it is that, as a matter of history and of fact, utilitarianism has had the misfortune to be so generally misapprehended as, to judge from these papers of

Why has utilitarianism been so much misunderstood as Mr Mill declares?

[1] This paragraph is added by the editor.

Mr Mill's, it would appear to have been. No other school of philosophy seems to have had so many enemies. How is it? And what is the real relation of utilitarianism to other moral systems which there have been? Let us look first at the word, and then at the thing.

The name itself is misleading from the contrast which it suggests (1) between the *utile* and *dulce*:

The word *utile*, or the useful, has in ethical use carried with it a double antithesis; or perhaps it would be more correct to say, that in ethics proper it has generally been used in contrast with the *honestum*, the worthy or honourable, and in ethics loose and popular, as of the poets, it has been used in contrast with the *dulce*, the winning or pleasant. Mr Mill in language of a kind not unfrequent in these papers, but which one is rather surprized to find coupled with such a regard as he has for the equality of men, finds fault with[1] 'the common herd, including the herd of writers' for 'perpetually falling into the shallow mistake' of supposing that the word *utilitarianism* implies an idea of morality contradistinguished from the pleasant, the agreeable, or the ornamental. Surely those who introduced the word, if they had ever read Horace, we will say, must have contemplated the probability of the misapprehension: much as a morality calling itself *dulcedinarianism* would be supposed to distinguish itself from one treating rather of the drily useful. Utilitarianism too, I think, has earned reputation with some from its name, as paying exclusive attention to the solidly valuable; though Mr Mill says little of any misapprehensions there may have been for *the better*. But in making a name we must be prepared for the ideas which it may suggest whether favorable or unfavorable[2].

[1] *Util.* p. 9.

[2] Bentham himself confessed that the term 'utility,' which he borrowed from Hume, was unsatisfactory, and proposed to substitute the

(2) between the *utile* and *honestum*.

• It is the same as to the antithesis between the *utile* and the *honestum*. I have no wish to justify the misapprehensions which led to the hard language used about utilitarianism in past times (as when, in a famous sermon[1], I once myself heard the phrase, 'the lowest of the low, the utilitarian himself'); but there is no doubt that some (perhaps not a few) on the utilitarian side have used and intended the word utilitarian as a provocative of them; taking pride in the condemnation of notions of honour, and of the finer and higher emotions, as empty prejudices. Here again utilitarianism has gained credit with some as suggesting by its title that it is the true morality of common sense; and if it takes undeserved gain, it must be prepared for undeserved loss. If Mr Mill had been willing that the philosophical school which he is defending should be called after its founder, like Epicureanism, or by some name of no ethical significance, like Stoicism, no such misapprehensions could have arisen; if he chooses to give a descriptive name, he must take the harm with the good. He cannot make such a name suggest exactly what *he* wants, and nothing more. He is master of the future significance of a name which had *not* been morally applied before, but not of one which had.

Its unpopularity may also be in part accounted for from its history.

But leaving the name, let us come to the thing. I have called by the name of philosophical[2] utilitarianism the very wide and general doctrine, that

phrase 'greatest-happiness-principle' for 'principle of utility.' See his *Works*, I. 271, X. 582. In the latter passage he is reported as saying 'Utility was an unfortunately chosen word. The idea it gives is a vague one. Dumont insists on retaining the word. He is bigoted, old, and indisposed to adopt what is new, even though it should be better.' A late writer on the same side suggests *beneficential* in place of *utilitarian*. See the *Fortnightly Review* for May 1869. ED.

[1] I have not been able to identify this. ED.

[2] See above p. 58.

what gives moral value to actions (i.e. makes them good and right), is really their felicific power alone (i.e. their conduciveness to somebody's happiness). The word utilitarianism is not a good word to express this; but I have used it for the sake of clearness, understanding by it the most general philosophical form of the doctrine, of which what Mr Mill defends is a particular case.

Utilitarianism in the 18th century was a revolt against jural ethics, at first emotional and conservative, eventually legislative and reforming.

It is not easy to describe in a few words the ethical spirit of a period without liability to error, but I think we may say that from the early part of the 18th century the spirit of ethics was becoming utilitarian in the general sense of the word which I have given; that is, happiness was becoming more a prominent idea and a matter of contemplation; the Stoic or jural conception of ethics was giving place to the Epicurean, and the ideas of rule, duty, and natural law, were gradually being superseded by that of action towards happiness. The form in which this tendency to Epicureanism showed itself was at first *emotional* rather than exact and matter-of-fact; and no wonder, the whole being a reaction against the supposed dryness and dogmatism of the ethics of natural law. In its commencement this reform, as it was considered, of ethics was literary and scientific, rather than practical: moral philosophers sought to put ethics upon a right literary basis, not to reform society by means of ethics. As the century went on, utilitarianism or Epicureanism began to spread as a practical spirit, independently of philosophy. In fact, Epicureanism in its best form is less of a philosophy than most other ethical schools; by which I mean it has avowedly less reverence for philosophical ideas, and appeals more to common sense. Hence the practical utilitarianism or Epicureanism which was then arising was

in some respects a feeling against philosophy altogether. At this time then, say in the middle of last century, old-fashioned philosophy was that of natural law, new-fashioned philosophy was utilitarianism or Epicureanism of the emotional type. Add to this, that the spirit of that age was a spirit of unenthusiastic and rather dull desire of amendment and change; absence of much respect for the old, hopefulness, but not much imaginativeness, as to the future and new. But under this was rising up another spirit of reform of a much more vigorous nature which came to the surface about the end of the century, and with it the utilitarianism which Mr Mill defends. It generated, as such a spirit is sure to do, a vigorous antagonist to itself in a spirit of energetic conservatism.

Meaning of the terms 'conservative' and 'reforming' in application to moral systems.

In speaking of the *conservative* and *reforming* character of one or another kind of philosophical teaching, though I use political language for convenience, I mean it *morally*, in this manner. Throughout all the history of ethical philosophy, besides that difference in moral teaching which arises from difference of positive dogma, there is a vast difference to be noted as to the spirit, showing itself primarily in the difference of view as to the object and aim of moral philosophy. If it is looked upon as a serious thing, something which is to go to the bottom of human nature, which is to give to man, not only guards and restraints of his action, but also the principles and initiative of it: if it has thus associated with it some of that earnestness (very misdirected perhaps) which more properly belongs to our notions of religion: if, consequently, it considers its task in relation to human feelings and society to be mainly one of correction and regeneration;—it has then what I mean by a *reforming* character. If on the

other hand, it looks upon itself as a sort of second thought, a superaddition to, not a constituent of, man's moral existence; as useful, but what might be done without; as what no state of human society could really owe its existence to, but as what must recognize such state, amend and supervise it as it can: if it contents itself, in the main, scientifically with describing human society, and practically with reinforcing and strengthening it;—it has then what I mean by a conservative character.

Of the two the former is in the notion of it the better and nobler, and comes up more, I think, to the true meaning of morality: but a morality of this kind is as difficult and dangerous as it is in its nature noble, and bad forms of it may have something about them altogether terrible. Moral philosophy of the latter, or conservative, kind has often little practical influence, and takes the form rather of science or literature.

The character of a system in this respect is not determined by the nature of its doctrines, though some doctrines have a tendency to encourage the one or the other spirit.

Speaking generally, whatever may be the doctrines of an ethical system, the spirit of any particular development of it may be either reforming (or if we like so to call it, aggressive) on the one side; or it may be conservative and acquiescent on the other. Still, particular philosophical doctrines may be in their nature more apt to encourage the one or the other spirit. Epicureanism, for instance, as to its doctrine, is more akin to the acquiescent spirit. It has had developments of a reforming or aggressive character, as in Lucretius, who preaches a kind of worship of the founder of the sect almost as if it were a new religion, and enthusiastically anticipates a regeneration of human society on a basis of what we may call an early secularism and positivism. But in a general way, Epicureanism had the reputation, and with justice, of being of a quiescent spirit. The occupation

of a large space in the mind by the idea of happiness is likely to generate the thought of enjoyment rather than that of labour; and a similar preponderance of the idea of usefulness is not likely to generate enthusiasm.

Reforming utilitarianism (Bentham).

The Benthamic utilitarianism, to which I alluded as rising into importance at the end of the last century, is on the one hand, in the prominence which it gives to the idea of *happiness* as compared with the idea of *duty*, a reaction against the old ethics of natural law; and, on the other hand, in the positiveness, matter-of-fact-ness, emphatic rationality, which it professes, a reaction from the *sentimental* ethics, or the *emotional* forms of the morality of happiness; or, if we like better, it is a recurrence to the older rational and unsentimental ethics in so far as it looks on ethics as moral *legislation* rather than as moral *pathology* (if I may use the word), or a theory of moral feeling; while at the same time, in place of the older view that this legislation is to be an expansion and development of the idea of duty, it fully adopts the view that happiness is to be the sole end of such legislation. It is full of the practical spirit of the age, uniting however its contempt for the unproductiveness and vanity of past philosophy with an unbounded confidence in the results of a better philosophy; and it is entirely without fear as to the risk involved in its hoped for reconstruction of society.

Revolutionary utilitarianism (Godwin).

Contemporary with this was a good deal of other philosophy which I suppose is to be called utilitarianism, but which differed in many respects from that of Bentham. The same determined reformingness however, or, as it was considered by enemies, *revolutionariness*, belongs to all. I mention this other utilitarianism (Godwin may be taken as a type of it), not with a view of involving the opinions of Ben-

tham and those following him in any condemnation which may belong to it, but because it is necessary to have this philosophy in mind in order to understand the great fear and opposition which the reforming utilitarianism excited.

Conservative utilitarianism (Paley).

The conservative utilitarianism of Paley is, in the same manner as the utilitarianism of Bentham, a reaction against sentimentalism, an outgrowth of the practical feeling of the age appealing to common sense against philosophy, a concentration of all moral thought on the idea of happiness, and an exhibition of ethics as moral legislation, with very little notice of feeling or character. Of course, as all are aware, little as is the difference of principle or doctrine between Paley and Bentham, the difference in spirit is complete.

Paley less consistent than Bentham: an apologist while seeming to be a judge, but able to make out his case.

There can be no doubt, I think, that the advantage as to fairness of philosophizing is on the side of Bentham. Paley's ethical or substantial conservatism stands out the stronger upon the ground of his political or circumstantial liberality and openness to views of improvement. This is no reproach to him; for in reality, considering the vast weight of the interests involved in the stability of human moral society, a man, it seems to me, need not be ashamed to avow a prejudice in favour of conservatism of this kind; what is in possession has already one great point and presumption in its favour. But it is not right to disclaim all respect for the past or for that which already exists, as such; it is not right to appear to be bringing it all to fair trial, and to be establishing it on the proper grounds, and deducing it from the true root,—and yet *really* to be acting the part, not of an investigator, but of an apologist. The real value of Paley's book is in showing how the institutions of morality satisfy the conditions of

utility, which they do most thoroughly. In making out, as he would, that utility alone suggested them, and furnishes the reason for their continuance, he is all in error.

The opposition of Paley and Bentham shows that the acceptance of utilitarianism does not put an end to difference of opinion.

One conclusion we may certainly draw from this brief review of the history of utilitarianism; whatever may be its claims to our belief on other grounds, at any rate it does not furnish so unquestionable a test for settling differences of opinion as some of its advocates would make out. Nearly at the same time the mass of existing custom and feeling was examined with reference to this test by Paley and by Bentham, and was reported by the former to be in all its great points right, by the latter to be full of wrong, and to need most extensive reformation.

Not to dwell longer on this however, I will now proceed to examine some of the misapprehensions of utilitarianism of which Mr Mill complains.

On first looking at these as they appear in his pages, the reader will see at once that they concern, some one form of it, some another; and hence too they are easily met as he meets them, by fixing on some form of it (and he is most liberal in supposing new forms) to which they do not apply. For instance, I suppose that no one ever styled the utilitarianism of Paley 'a godless doctrine,' which is one charge against utilitarianism cited[1].

The early objections to utilitarianism were on the ground of its supposed revolutionary character. Even the conservative utilitarianism, while it

In a general way, the hard language against utilitarianism fifty or sixty years ago was directed against its reforming or supposedly revolutionary character. This character of the older utilitarianism should be remembered by those who read what Mr Mill says in the 33rd page: 'Defenders of utility often find themselves called upon to reply to such objections as this; that there is not time, previous to

[1] *Util.* p. 30.

defends existing custom, yet allows it no authority.

action, for calculating and weighing the effects of any line of conduct on the general happiness.' The answer to which is, 'that there has been ample time, namely, the whole past duration of the human species. During all that time mankind have been learning by experience the tendencies of actions.' What was the degree of contempt of the reforming utilitarians for the experience of past ages as embodied in customs, institutions, and traditionary feelings, we may judge from seeing how great it was even in the conservative utilitarians, such as Paley. Even in him every custom or institution has to put in its utility as its justification; its *existence* is never allowed to be pleaded by it as a presumption of its utility. Whether the argument is fairly conducted, and whether such a presumption is ever *tacitly* allowed to weigh, is not our business, which is with the principles of utilitarianism, as showing themselves in arguments conducted upon them. In the reforming utilitarianism it is clear that the negation of any presumption of utility from existence is the leading thought.

Mr Mill professes to recognize authority in existing custom, but in so doing he departs from the principles of utilitarianism:

'On any hypothesis,' says Mr Mill, 'short of universal idiocy, mankind must by this time have acquired positive beliefs as to the effects of some actions upon their happiness; and the beliefs which have thus come down are the rules of morality for the multitude, and for the philosopher until he has succeeded in finding better.' If the study of the past beliefs of mankind as to what makes their happiness is one of the things which utilitarianism, as modified by Mr Mill, is to take into itself; and if authority in the question is allowed to these, utilitarianism gains indeed, and it is a most real gain, in wideness and range of view; just what it seems to me moral philosophy wants. But then I do not

see, when utilitarianism has got thus to face the vast study of past human experience, what is to become of the simplicity and quasi-infallibility which it certainly attributed to itself. Bentham thought he could systematize happiness on his own principles in such a way as to render the study of men's positive beliefs (for which he had not apparently much respect) unnecessary. What he thought, so far as I can understand, was just this, that he had found something better than the past beliefs of mankind, this better thing being the principle of utilitarianism. Mr Mill is determined to vindicate for utilitarianism contradictory merits. What I should consider, in common with many others not calling themselves utilitarians, is that human happiness is a difficult thing to understand, and that, in order to know what constitutes it, we must examine in history what man has done and the customs and institutions which he has formed for himself; of course a large and most perplexing study. But if utilitarianism has the merit of recognizing the value and interest of this, it must not at the same time have the merit of being able to give us a simple system of human happiness ready to our hand, and to say, Here is a plain and certain rule by which to regulate action.

and in fact hardly expresses his own convictions; his real sympathies being with the reforming utilitarianism.

Though however Mr Mill here, where it is called for in order to answer an objection, mentions positive beliefs with a respect which, if it had been shown by previous utilitarians, would probably have obviated the objection; he does not seem to me in this place, so much as in others where he improves upon the old utilitarianism, to be giving what is really his own truer view. I judge from this. He only meets the objection as it lies against the reforming utilitarianism, not at all as it lies, which it does just as much though from another point of view,

against conservative utilitarianism. I conclude therefore that it is the former with which he identifies himself; in other words, that the special charm of utilitarianism to him is, not the simple fact of the moral importance which it attributes to utility or happiness, but the idea that by means of this a great reform may be brought about in the beliefs and customs and feelings of men. No one can think that I attribute this to him as blame. In his desire, if not in respect of the way in which it is to be brought about, I strongly sympathize with him. But, this being so, I am not inclined to think that the respect for past human experience, and for positive beliefs, is a thing which he would himself care to have joined with his utilitarianism in the same way as (I am sure he would) those considerations of sociality and sympathy to which I have already so often alluded.

The new utilitarianism, though with a much wider ethical view, retains the intolerant spirit of the old reforming utilitarianism.

It is to be regretted that notwithstanding the really wide and catholic view which characterizes Mr Mill's utilitarianism, it should be so intolerant in spirit. I look upon this intolerance as a relic unfortunately preserved of the reforming utilitarianism when it woke up as a self-confident, exclusive, aggressive doctrine, little caring whom it offended, or, in humble language, whose toes it trod on, so long as it pressed its way forward; rather asserting itself the more boldly against objections than qualifying itself to meet them, and with no anxiety at all that all men should speak well of it: all this too at a time, three quarters of a century ago, when there was more plain speaking on both sides than there is now—when people were thoroughly in earnest—an interesting time as all such must be. But the intolerance, which was natural and excusable then, is surely not appropriate for a utilitarianism such as the present;

which might really almost be called a syncretism rather than an independent system of philosophy, showing itself more jealous of opponents than confident in its own principles, and ready passively to admit of any doctrine being incorporated with it provided that an objection may thereby be met.

The welcome given to the conservative utilitarianism as an antidote to the reforming shows that at first the principle itself excited no dislike.

That the cause of the original dislike to utilitarianism was not so much any doctrine properly belonging to it as its supposed revolutionary spirit, is shown by the fact that it was proposed to cure this by a homœopathic treatment, driving out bad utilitarianism with good. In this way it was that so much value was set upon Paley and his writings. The feeling against utilitarianism itself, as being at any rate an insufficient morality, and giving an insufficient account of human nature, was one that came later and was probably a good deal owing to Coleridge.

Afterwards it fell under suspicion as tending to lower the ideal of happiness, confounding justice and benevolence, and neglecting relative duties:

Different forms of this suspicion may be specified. In the case of persons of imagination and feeling it may arise from the fear, not unfrequently justified, that utilitarians in their haste to map out human happiness as an end of action, may take account only of the coarser and lower elements of it, and may omit those which are higher and more real, but less readily describable. In the case of the larger mass of men, whose tendency is more toward action than imagination, it arises from the notion that utilitarianism does not sufficiently in its principles distinguish justice from benevolence. This is a suspicion to which men are very much disposed, and to which no doubt any moral teaching which brings out strongly the importance of benevolence is mistakenly liable, so that utilitarians may plead that it has been directed against some precepts even of Christianity itself. But against utilitarianism it really does lie,

because on *its* principles it is not possible to give what men will usually recognize as a sufficient account why we must be just before we are generous, must pay our debts, for instance, before we relieve a neighbour who is in greater need than our creditor is. Akin to this suspicion is that which looks upon utilitarianism as likely to pay too little regard to what are commonly called relative duties. The satire, of which some time ago utilitarianism was the object, was perhaps more directed to this than to anything else. We had stories of people robbing from their parents or betraying their friends for the sake of promoting some greater happiness of a greater number of people.

above all as likely to lead to an over-valuing of a man's own happiness, and to the diminution of public spirit;

But it is probable that the commonest suspicion against utilitarianism arises from the idea that if people are taught to value happiness so much, and are so much occupied in determining the details of happiness, they will think so much of *their own* happiness that they will fail in public spirit. And when the utilitarian explains that it is not a man's own happiness but the general happiness which should be aimed at indiscriminately and impartially by each, people may not perhaps disbelieve, but they are puzzled as to what can be meant by this. Happiness to each man is inevitably (till he has learnt to bridge over the division) divided into two great parts, his own and that of others; it is a mere feature of individuality that this should be so; and so far as these parts present themselves distinctly to his view, we have got to teach him to *undervalue* the one as a condition to his *sufficiently valuing* the other; and no amount of pains spent in making the happiness of others clear to his view will make him act for it unless we can supersede in him, to such extent as may be, the idea of acting for happiness as to him-

self. Bentham thought that the existing moral philosophy was unpractical, because it did not teach sufficiently plainly what human happiness was, and that, if this were effected, all that was needed was done. But he was unpractical himself in thinking that it would be done, and that the only reason why it had not been done hitherto was because men had not known what he thus told them. So far as moral philosophy can help to supply what is needed, it must investigate the mind of acting man as well as the wants and pleasures of suffering and enjoying man: we want, by the side of the philosophy of happiness, a philosophy of self-conduct, self-command, self-denial, self-forgetfulness; and that, not as something subsidiary to the other and for the end only of it, but as something parallel with it and of equal importance, a part or function of that same human nature or human life, of which happiness itself is a part or function.

from the exclusive importance which it ascribed to *knowledge* as opposed to *will*.

It is I suppose a general feeling that what is needed in respect of philanthropy, though to some extent *knowledge*, is still more *will*, and that such philosophies as by their principles are likely to strengthen the will are more valuable, and therefore perhaps likely to be more true, than such as go rather only to add to the knowledge. It is in this way that the principle of asceticism, which may perhaps be considered the exact antipodes of utilitarianism, has added indefinitely to human happiness. The first thing which is wanted in order to make people act with public spirit is, not that they should think much of happiness, but that they should set before them worthy purposes which they wish to bring about; that they should feel vividly wants which they see, and act accordingly. The second thing wanted to make them act, not only with public spirit, but with intelligent public spirit,

is that they should think much of what happiness consists in, or else, however well-intentioned their action may be, it will be productive of little good result.

Utilitarianism further suspected as a morality of calculation, taking no account of sympathy:

The idea of selfishness in regard to utilitarianism has been confused more or less with the idea of its being a morality of *calculation*, an idea which, whether rightly or wrongly, has excited much distaste for it. It is singular that there should be in men's minds this distrust of human reason in relation to morality, amounting almost to a suspicion that coolness and deliberation must somehow really mean selfishness. The explanation is that people cannot conceive of philanthropy apart from feeling: when therefore reason, as applied to philanthropy, proposes itself not as the director, corrector, accompaniment of such feeling, but as itself prescribing from principles of its own the particulars of what is to be done; this apparent disregard of sympathy, as a means of estimating the happiness of others, makes it feared that such a philosophy will give so little encouragement to sympathy that the happiness of others will never be really thought of at all. And no doubt it is possible that injury may be done to a man as a moral agent by making his objective duty too definite and clear as a matter of reason before him, if in the course of doing it we weaken his respect for those dispositions of his mind which on the whole are what lead him towards right, teaching him to distrust these because they often overshoot their mark or err from it. This applies not to utilitarianism alone, but to all kinds of moral philosophy which aim at definitely fixing what is man's proper conduct, whether they do this by determining duties, or by requiring reason to be given for conduct and feelings in terms of utility.

Another reason for the jealousy with which the 'morality of calculation' has been regarded, is the notion that action would have to be postponed until there had been full investigation of all its possible results. And this is so plainly undesirable and impracticable that the good faith of the calculators or investigators is to a certain degree suspected. We have seen that Mr Mill answers this objection by saying that the calculation has been already performed for us by past generations of men, and that he as an utilitarian is ready to accept the verdict of their experience as embodied in existing customs and beliefs. But no morality can go by these alone. It is the business of every morality more or less to test and correct them. Moreover in regard to many actions, if appealed to, they will answer nothing. Independently of them therefore, it is urged, there is wanted a guide, and the morality of consequences is not a trustworthy guide. Men want something to decide what their action should be, not only more rapidly, but with more authority, with more deciding force, than would result from the sort of approximate conclusion, which is all that the reckoning of the consequences could furnish them with. They feel that duty and virtue present themselves in quite another form from that in which they would be presented by the mere reckoning of consequences. And it is because utilitarianism, even when conservative, scarcely takes account of any other than this latter form that they are not satisfied with it.

and delaying action till the reckoning is complete. This objection is not removed by an appeal to past experience: there is need of a present authoritative guide.

In thinking of the history of moral philosophy, we are rather inclined to forget to how great a degree, especially in more recent times, moral philosophy is embodied in religion. If we do not keep this in mind, but look at the history of moral philosophy

The history of moral philosophy is to be studied less in ethical treatises than in the

general thought of the time, especially on religion.

only as it is contained in avowedly ethical treatises, the history can never be to us more than a matter of literature; and the point of much the greatest consequence about it, which is, the relation of the ethics of any period to the general thought of that period, is a matter which we shall not be in a condition to speak of.

Relation of the old utilitarianism to the religion of the time.

Utilitarianism, as a philanthropic, that is, in fact, a Christian Epicureanism, presented an aspect to religion, as it was most habitually viewed in the last century, by no means unpleasing: there is often a jealousy, on the part of religion, of the more aspiring doctrines of moral philosophy, such as Platonism and Stoicism, as tending to provide a sort of religion of their own, which is not in general likely to be felt as to utilitarianism. Thus it came to pass that religion at that time dealt with utilitarianism very much as, contemporaneously, the old French *régime* did with the spirit of reform: delighted in it in its moderation, quite unprepared for the vehement outbreak of it which was to arise. In its state of excitement utilitarianism showed itself as capable of developing ideas of enthusiasm and of a sort of religion of its own as any kind of philosophy could be. Its estrangement from religion was partly owing to this, and partly owing to the deeper spirit which on the other hand began to take possession of religion.

General relation of utilitarianism to Christianity.

The general relation of the ethics of utilitarianism to the ethics of Christianity is a subject of much importance, which has been touched on by Mr Mill in a passage where he expresses himself to the effect that the gospel breathes in its purest form the spirit of the ethics of utility[1]. That this account leaves at any rate some room for misconception will, I think, appear from the following considerations.

[1] *Util.* p. 24.

Utilitarianism, *i. e.* the modern and practical utilitarianism, is properly a philanthropic Epicureanism. It is a common-sense philosophy as Epicureanism was; in other words, it is to a certain extent a negation of philosophy; and besides this (though far from being a negation of *morality* in its practical character) it is very much a negation of *moral thought*. The understanding of human feeling is a complicated problem, which men in the various philosophies of the last century set themselves to solve in one way or another; and as against all this, utilitarianism introduced for moral philosophy a simply methodical benevolence. Viewed in this light, utilitarianism may be called a philanthropic system of action for happiness; and as this description would not badly suit Christianity itself, it may be thought that Mr Mill is justified in claiming the authority of Christianity for the ethics of utility.

Of the two elements recognized by both, (love of our neighbour and value for happiness), utilitarianism starts from the latter, Christianity from the former.

But there is this great difference between them. In practical utilitarianism, as in Christianity, there are the two elements, philanthropy (or love of our neighbour), and value for, thought of, action for, happiness: and in the best practical utilitarians, as in the best Christians, I have full belief that the former element is most active and powerful: were it not so, I do not think utilitarianism would ever be aggressive and enthusiastic. But what makes the real distinction between them is that, while each recognizes both of the above-mentioned elements, utilitarianism chooses to build itself (philosophically) upon the latter element; to take that as its principle; to call itself the morality of happiness; to deduce itself from Epicureanism, not from anything like Christianity; to define right action as action promotive of happiness, and only by degrees, as we see Mr Mill does in these papers, to intro-

duce these considerations of philanthropy, which in practice, as I have no wish to deny, it takes fully into account. But this mistake as to the foundation injures it all through; for it starts from that which is the wrong side for getting the action done. Christianity, on the contrary, starts from the right side. Philanthropy; or the love of our neighbour, *will* produce action for the general happiness, but knowledge, the most thorough, of what it is that makes the general happiness, will *not* produce philanthropy. When we put together the two elements of love to men, and right judgment about, and value for, happiness, as both Christianity and utilitarianism do, we must remember that the moral and fruitful principle is not the right judgment about happiness, important as that is, but is the love for men.

The philanthropic character of modern utilitarianism is due to Christianity: but the authority of the latter cannot be claimed for utilitarianism more than for other ethical systems.

More than this: if the Gospel had not existed, I do not think the modern and practical utilitarianism would. Not that it would not have suggested itself; for to suppose that the Gospel was needed to inform men that it was good to love their neighbour is absurd; but without the general influence upon human feeling which the Gospel has had, I do not think that the new Epicureanism would have associated itself so intimately, so immediately, so as a matter of course, with philanthropy as it did, and as it is evident that general human feeling required it to do, on pain of not even being considered morality at all. Christianity breathes the spirit of the ethics of utility, as it does the spirit of all other ethics, to the extent of their truth; not in the least in contradistinction to the spirit of other ethics. In practice, Christianity has been the nurse not only of benevolence, of meekness, and peaceableness, but of every variety of elevated character and generous action: it has strung up the fibres of man's

moral being to every form of virtue, as well as guided him in each part of justice. 'Render to all their dues,' is as cardinal a principle of it as 'Love your neighbour.'

We see then that utilitarianism, though an offshoot, and in its better forms a most worthy offshoot, of Christianity, is far from coming up to Mr Mill's claim for it to represent the whole of Christian ethics. Nor again can it be considered to be in any exclusive sense the ethics of practical philanthropy. Of this I have already spoken a little, but will defer the fuller consideration of it to another chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE PRACTICAL CHARACTER OF UTILITARIANISM, OR ITS RELATION TO WHAT IS NEEDED FROM MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

I PROCEED now to the consideration of the practical position and value of utilitarianism at this time; how far it is the quarter to which we should look for the moral improvement of individuals and societies.

Utilitarianism is welcomed by some as a ready means of getting rid of philosophical difficulties:

I have already alluded to what we may call the philosophy of non-philosophy[1], springing from that dislike and weariness of complicated and refined reasoning which is perhaps more likely to arise in this age of the world than formerly, owing to the apparent resultlessness and inconclusiveness of all the philosophy which there has been hitherto. I have mentioned that utilitarianism has had an attraction for feeling of this kind, and that it has itself at times taken something of this character. This attraction and mixture is likely to continue. Moral philosophy would, in this point of view, become a science very similar in form and method to political economy; or, if we like better, ethics would much resemble economics. We might have a classical book written on 'The Happiness of Societies:' in which the nature of this happiness should be explained, the value of actions examined

[1] See above, pp. 224, 239. So Ferrier complains of Reid for making 'friends of the mammon of unphilosophy.' *Institutes*, p. 484. Ed.

as more or less contributory to it, and the whole methodized and systematized.

This idea, which *might* be all we could wish for morals, is nevertheless almost certain to be wrong in any form in which it can be put forward, for this reason; because it is pretty sure to be put forward as a short and easy method of proceeding, as something which may enable us to do without philosophy. It is supposed that happiness is a very easy and simple thing to understand and exhibit, something which need not require all the talking which has made philosophy hitherto. It is clear that the utilitarian principle commended itself to Bentham's mind quite as much from its being a principle so readily solving all moral difficulties, as it did in the apparent character of a principle self-evidently true and excellent. And many approaching the subject from quite an opposite direction have thought like him in this respect.

but this view is protested against by its more philosophical adherents, as by Mr Mill.

This view however of utilitarianism, while commending it to some, will have the opposite effect on others, to whom it will appear in consequence low and narrow-minded: and some of the objections made against it, and met by Mr Mill, are made in this view of it, and are met, in fact, by the saying that this view does not necessarily belong to it. It is only the older utilitarianism (which Mr Mill defends), and not at all the newer utilitarianism (which he holds), which has any sympathy with this non-philosophical spirit: and though he might seem to have a certain sympathy with the method of positivism, it does not seem to have any attraction for him in its character of a negation of philosophy.

Impatience of thought is itself unpractical; refus-

The kind of practical spirit which is intolerant of philosophy, and which some Englishmen are apt to vindicate to themselves and their country as an

ing the aid of thought, common sense becomes the victim of dreams.

honour to it, is a spirit which Mr Mill himself has in various places protested against. It is certainly a very foolish spirit. The really practical spirit, the spirit which is anxious to see work done, must first and foremost be large-minded and tolerant; must allow to each thing its merit in its place. A hasty and professed practicalness is the most unpractical of all things, and readily allies itself with wild dreams of imagination; so that not unfrequently that which piques itself on being common sense as against philosophy, only changes thought for a weak and poor dream. Common sense, we may say, is never able to be content with itself: it is almost certain to incorporate with itself bad philosophy while it protests against any. And the supposition that the work of the world is likely to be best done by refusing to think, and to think deeply if need be, through the agency of a supposed common sense, is a supposition so foolish (considering the complication of human life and the variety of human character), that it prevents any hope at least from the common sense of those who make it. Ethical philosophy is neither more nor less than the thought here mentioned, thought of man about his life, his character, and his work. This is a thing which there always has been, and always must be. Moral philosophy has been the effort to methodize and to systematize it. And if there is one error more than another to which moral philosophy has been liable from the first, it is that it has not been sufficiently true to itself, and has not sufficiently acknowledged the necessity and importance of *much* thought of this kind. The *partial* systematization, the exhibition, time after time, of a portion, or of one feature, of human nature as the whole of it, has resulted from a sort of feeling within moral philosophy similar to that which outside of it

has condemned philosophy altogether, a feeling that there should be as little call for thought as possible, that everything should be ready, simple, and immediate.

The infinite variety of human life and human character condemns any system which professes to furnish a short and easy method for determining human action.

As soon as we get out of the region of physical thought, the variety of human estimate or feeling makes itself observed; and as it is one of the things which moral philosophy must take most account of, so it is a thing which very much concerns the idea of moral philosophy itself. To give an instance: that which to Bentham and Paley was evidently a main inducement to make them believe the utilitarian philosophy to be true, the simplicity and apparent readiness of its application, would with me have an effect quite opposite. Life and society seem to me things so complicated, character a thing so various, that any supposition of people acting uniformly upon one motive, whatever it is, or of there being any infallible and single way (setting aside what may be told us by revelation) by which they may at once know what they should do, is to me the very strongest presumption, not of the truth, but of the falsehood, of any theory of which it forms a part. It is in the same way we might speak about happiness. I might, in a sense, accept the view of moral philosophy which I have supposed above, which would make 'the Happiness of Societies' the object of it, in the same way in which 'the Wealth of Nations' is the object of political economy. But I should certainly not accept it from any one who brought this view to me as one which would at once make moral philosophy a clear and methodical science, and remove all the difficulty which there has been about it hitherto. I should know at once that he must have a very faulty conception of human happiness, since he could conceive it possible that in finding and mapping it out

the same difficulties would not have to be encountered which belong to all considerations about human life and character. I should fear lest my idea of happiness might differ from his as much as our ideas differed on the subject of what is, or is not, presumption of truth. And the notion that in this way we were getting out of the difficulties of moral philosophy would seem to me like the delusion of a man who fancied he was getting out of embarrassments by changing the name and form of his obligations.

Utilitarianism may be of real value by adding to our knowledge of what happiness consists in: but the study of happiness is complicated, and does not at once supply rules for practice.

Utilitarianism then, it seems to me, in view of the future, may be of real practical value to us, if, instead of professing to make the way of morals easier than before (which is only, so far as it goes, a presumption against it), it devotes itself to the thorough study of human happiness in its nature and its constituents, so as to give help in *one* important branch of our action. For that in all attempts to procure happiness, whether for ourselves or for others, there is a great deal of helplessness and mistake, I think there can be no doubt. But this is one thing only in moral philosophy. There are others which must be attended to as well, or this by itself will lead to error. It is no new study, but one which men have always, unsystematically, been studying. But they have studied it in connexion with other things, and so it must be studied now; or else happiness, with even the best morally practical notions, if it is to be made distinct enough to act for, will be brought down from that lofty but somewhat vague ideal, in which character alone it is the proper end of all our action, to a something more tangible, in fact to mere pleasure. And this is an evil not merely from the degrading of human nature, so far as that may go, but from the utter futility and

inapplicability of the notion, even in the region of common sense. Happiness, vaguely meant, may be said to be the same for all, but pleasure is not. A happiness generalized out of ordinary pleasures, and inflicted by a Benthamic despotism on all, as what they are to direct their lives to procure in equal measures for themselves and for each other, would constitute a tyranny the little finger of which would be thicker and heavier than the loins of duty or asceticism.

Schemes in which happiness is chiefly contemplated tend to destroy the causes of some of the best existing happiness.

The study of the constituents of human happiness will not be practically useful and fruitful, if it is too large and prominent a part of moral philosophy, if too much is made to depend upon it, and if conclusions from it are made to regulate our action too simply and barely. There is far less happiness in the world now than one could wish there were: and in this respect the philanthropist's view is a sad one. But I much question whether, if we compare the actual state as to this with any scheme of happiness on earth which has ever been thought of as an ideal to act for and aim at, there is not as much happiness now as there would be on such a scheme. I think that any such scheme must bear to the present complicated state of things something of the relation which a communistic settlement or *phalanstère* of any kind bears to an ordinary settlement of human beings as they live now. I do not think in general that all the abundance to eat and drink, all the quiet and absence of fear, all the comparative freedom from pain and sickness which there is in the former, would in the general way compensate, as to happiness, for the want of interest and of that endless calling forth of feeling which is excited in our present state by the variety of circumstance and of character. As the communistic settlement would tend to destroy the

variety, not only picturesque, but infinitely beloved, of homes however humble, so the ideal happiness would tend to merge the individualities of feeling which really not only make much of the interest, but of the actual happiness, of life.

Though I do not therefore deny that it may be possible, ideally, to pluck up the tares of human trouble without rooting out with them the wheat of real human happiness, I think it requires a very large view of happiness indeed for anything like this; a view which shall in reality involve attention to various other things besides happiness, and which shall at once preclude the summary use of the idea of happiness as a ready method of finding our duty.

There are two things which hinder the promotion of happiness, viz. ignorance and indisposition: utilitarianism affords a partial remedy for the one:

It appears then that utilitarianism is far from providing a complete remedy for the helplessness or ignorance which has been mentioned as one of the chief obstacles to the promotion of the general happiness. It can only remedy this partially, because the action which it recommends (owing to its incomplete view of human nature) will constantly be not so really promotive of human happiness as the simpler and more unconscious action suggested by our natural sensibilities. The other obstacle which has been mentioned, namely indisposition or the want of kindly feeling, it will scarcely remedy at all: it is the other kinds of ethical philosophy, which utilitarianism despises, that really are occupied with the causes of this, and will do what can be done to remedy it. That such is the case will be apparent from the following considerations.

for the other a remedy must be sought from a different kind of philosophy.

Speaking generally, it may be said that the increase of public spirit and unselfishness is what all moral systems alike wish for and aim at. The special doctrine of utilitarianism, from this point of view, is that people should think more about actions (or laws)

being fruitful for happiness, whosesoever it is: the special doctrines of other philosophies, by which *they* would aim at the same result, are, that men should prefer worthy and honourable action to enjoyment, that they should be most careful in doing their utmost to satisfy every claim upon them and being faithful to every trust, that they should identify the feelings of others with their own by sympathy, &c.

Now, for the making men public-spirited and unselfish, do we think that the utilitarian contribution, which is, carefulness on the part of men that none of their actions should be wasted, but that all should produce some happiness of somebody, will do more for us than the contributions of those other philosophies, which will increase the feeling of honour, will increase the feeling of sympathy, will increase regard to mutual duty?

This shown in the case of communistic associations. Supposing them good, what is wanted for their establishment?

I think we may try this question in a practical way by considering the case of association in the way of communism, socialism, or any intimate kind of partnership which tends to supersede individual independence in respect of property. Mr Mill looks forward to improved organization of society in these respects as likely to produce a great increase of public spirit and unselfishness[1]. (On this I will speak in a future chapter[2].) Others, again, consider the matter rather the other way; that though these things may be good, yet human nature is not such that they are to any great extent practicable. Let us suppose them good, and let us suppose that if they did to any great extent exist, they would much

[1] *Util.* 19—21, 46, 47. Compare also the chapters on Property, and on the Probable future of the labouring classes, in the *Principles of Political Economy*. Ed.

[2] See below, ch. xx.

elevate the morality of human nature: what then is needed for, and what hinders, their establishment? Mr Mill, anticipating with the spread of utilitarianism much increase of organization of this kind, supposed good and productive of good, must consider that what is most needed in order to its arising is more thought, on the part of people in general, about happiness, more value for it, and more knowledge of what it really consists in. Now, as a practical fact *in the present*, what I believe renders attempts of this kind less successful than those who make them would wish, is not any want of value for happiness or want of thought about happiness, but rather a deficiency in such feelings as those of honour and mutual confidence, without a large measure of which no organization of this kind can subsist. Utilitarianism must borrow something of the μεγαλοψυχία of the ancient philosophy, and other feelings which it is its tendency to deride, if the results which it vainly claims to be able to bring about itself are really to be accomplished.

Such associations in past times have been established on the anti-utilitarian or ascetic principle.

Again, as a practical fact *in the past*, organizations, whether real or imaginary, which have involved the community of property, and have *thus* helped unselfishness, have, I think, relied more on the anti-utilitarian principle of despising happiness than on the utilitarian principle of highly valuing it. The communistic association of rulers which Plato sets at the head of his ideal republic is expressly described as organized not with a view to the happiness of the individuals of it, but to that of the whole body of which they were the rulers: what *they* are described as valuing is reason, virtue, justice: with the mass, their looking solely, as is represented to be their character, to the desirable or to happiness is considered to incapacitate them for any

such organization, instead of qualifying them for it according to the utilitarian supposition.

So in the early Christian Church, (and the same, in a less degree, has probably been the case on other occasions of special freshness of the religious feeling), community of property was possible as long as, in the fervour of their first enthusiasm, people thought little about earthly happiness; but became impossible as soon as they began to have leisure to think more about it. And since then, it has been asceticism, not value for happiness, which has been the most fruitful mother of this kind of unselfishness.

I think we may say then that, not only is the morality of public spirit and unselfishness no part of utilitarianism, but it is not in any particular manner aided by it.

Mr Mill indeed claims for utilitarianism the power to reform human nature by increasing the strength of the social affections; but in speaking of this reformation (and in very beautiful language he does speak of it, as in p. 49), he really casts himself loose, not only from the narrow utilitarianism of his predecessors, but from anything that can by any possibility be called utilitarianism, and from the utilitarian principle or philosophy altogether. He seems almost to have forgotten that he has defined utilitarianism as the philosophy which values one thing simply in regard of actions, viz. their promotiveness of happiness, and that the moral problem with utilitarians is thus limited to the distinguishing between actions which are, and actions which are not, conducive to happiness. Forgetting this apparently, when he is describing moral improvement, (which, in the utilitarian view, should be simply an increased knowledge of, and value for, happiness), he places it in 'the generation in each

Mr Mill, it is true, anticipates great moral reforms from utilitarianism; but his reforming doctrines are really alien to the utilitarian philosophy. So Bentham's earnest philanthropy had no connexion with his professed doctrines.

individual of a feeling of unity with all the rest.' This is most undoubtedly moral improvement, and a very noble description of it: but what has it to do with utilitarianism? Does not such a description of moral improvement show convincingly that however Mr Mill may seek to persuade others that utilitarianism is right (the principle of which is that the goodness of an action consists in its conduciveness to happiness rather than to unhappiness), he himself considers that its goodness consists in conduciveness to the general, rather than to our own particular, happiness;—a doctrine which is in no respect connected with any utilitarian principle, and belongs much more to quite different schools? So the noble philanthropy which made Bentham devote his life to an examination of the particulars of human happiness and the ways in which such happiness might best be promoted, and which led him, judging of others by himself, to consider that nothing more was wanted in order to make men act for the happiness of others than that they should be rightly informed what that happiness was,—this, as I have said before, is something quite alien from the utilitarianism which he would teach: the foundation and the superstructure belong to different kinds of feeling. So far as utilitarianism teaches us the old doctrine of the excellence of public spirit and unselfishness, let it be listened to indeed; but it is strange to find it teaching thus in substance only what all ethical systems teach, and yet at the same time giving itself out as some new thing, full of anger at being misunderstood and persecuted, yet confident in its power to reform all ethics.

Public spirit variously

Mr Mill[1] seems, if I do not mistake him, to look forward to a time when the recognition of the

[1] *Util.* p. 45.

general happiness as the ethical standard will bring about a sort of revolutionary consummation in moral thought. The following considerations may lead us to doubt whether such a consummation is either possible or desirable. Since man is a free and most fallible agent, and can apparently only arrive at truth and right (so far as he does arrive at them) after long effort and much mistake, we need not take the manner in which he *has* organized himself into society as what must rule the manner in which he is to do so for all ages: but we must take it as illustrating his natural sentiment; for in what other way can we come to be aware of this natural sentiment, as being general? Now so far as in the indistinctness of human thought there has been any widely recognized ethical standard, man has always considered that public-spirited action, so to call it, is what he *ought* to practise, while selfish action (with many brilliant exceptions) is what he is most *inclined* to practise. But this public-spirited action is in his view a very complicated thing, involved with all sorts of particular duty, and the limits between it and selfishness are very indefinite; for instance, attachment to family is in some points of view selfish, in others not. It is possible that the introduction of the idea of the general happiness, and the getting it distinctly into view, may be of great value in improving the character of this public spirit, and in freeing it from narrow-mindedness. But the definite mutual duty which is the basis of this public spirit, and of which it is an extension, must never be dissolved away into a general duty to mankind; nor must the morality of general happiness claim to be founded on natural sentiment unless it takes with it that which belongs to the natural sentiment, namely, particularity as well as generality, and the arriving

involved with particular duty is already recognized as the ethical standard.

It may perhaps be improved by the distinct recognition of happiness: but if this is meant to supersede the old regard for particular duty, nothing is gained.

at the idea of wishing for the happiness of *all* by extending that of wishing for the happiness of one another.

Which alternative Mr Mill has in view is not clear.

Now when Mr Mill uses the words 'when once the general happiness is recognised as the ethical standard,' I feel it difficult to make out how far utilitarianism in his eyes commends itself as an effort, such as men have always been making, to improve the old sociality, an effort profiting by the experience of the past; or how far on the other side 'the recognition of the general happiness as the ethical standard' is to be considered a new and regenerating principle different from that recognition which human sociality has made hitherto, being in fact a recognition of the general happiness as what gives reason to the particular duties, so that independently of it they have no value or stringency. This latter is the view of utilitarianism which, as I said in a former chapter, causes it to be looked on by many with dislike[1].

The Epicureanism of utilitarianism is inconsistent with its reforming spirit: even the latter will not lead to real improvement if it does not consider the existing relations of life more patiently.

Whichever of these may be Mr Mill's view, it is highly probable that much of good may result from his efforts at moral reform; and I have no sympathy with any attempts which may have been made to discourage utilitarianism in what it does in this direction. But its philosophy is wrong one way or other. Its Janus faces, of the old Epicureanism on the one side, to which the idea of the regeneration of human society was about the last which would have suggested itself; and on the other, of the new, earnest, almost enthusiastic feeling of what may be done by association and better education, make it a difficult matter to say *which* way it is wrong: it is hard to seize the guiding thread of it. But we may say as much as this. Though the world may be, as

[1] See above, p. 234.

Mr Mill thinks (and I rejoice that he thinks so) still young, and we living in a comparatively early state of human advancement[1], yet the great features of morality I suppose we must take as known and given: a new morality would therefore be immorality. Utilitarianism therefore is wrong if it aims at this. If, on the other hand, it aims to better the old, it must take more fair account of what the old is. It must be willing to learn from human nature more than it seems inclined to do, before it can properly teach. It must not mix up all the many relations and purposes in man's complicated life in one vague and general idea of an universal aiming at happiness.

We may accept all the practical suggestions made by utilitarians, without accepting the utilitarian philosophy.

Let us grant, if we like, all the *positive* (if we may call them so) and practical efforts of utilitarianism to be right; let us consider that Bentham's laborious efforts to show people in what their happiness lay, and the best provisions for securing it, were so much gain to human practical knowledge; and that the attempts to give more of a feeling of community to men, to make people associate together more and better, and more feel themselves one and brethren, from which Mr Mill anticipates so much, will really have good effect. No distinctive philosophy is necessarily concerned with this. All philosophies aim at making men happy and social, whatever they may aim at besides. When Mr Mill speaks about people coming more and more to feel themselves one, these ideas are due in the first instance either to the Stoic philosophy or still more to Christianity. Nothing is less new in the world than this, though indeed it can never grow old or obsolete. Even the religion 'de l'Humanité' is not, unless its professors choose to make it so, inconsistent with the religion of Christ. The worship of

[1] *Util.* p. 48.

human nature, as distinguished from Christianity, is only Christianity separated from its religious roots, yet with the language of religion still attached to it.

What is distinctive in it is its negative character, its assumption that all that preceded it was worthless.

But why should this *philanthropy* of utilitarianism join with itself a philosophy, the distinctive character of which is necessarily that in its practical application it is *negative*, since, as we have seen, the *positive* conduct which results from it belongs to all philosophies alike? When the thought came into Bentham's mind that the greatest happiness of the greatest number was a most worthy object of human exertion, and when he nobly devoted his life to researches into the way of producing it, why was it necessary to take such pains as he did to prove that there was nothing else valuable? Was it reasonable to think that his youthful and sanguine thought, scarcely examined or reflected on, was basis enough not only for his positive fabric of contribution to our knowledge about human happiness, but for the reconstruction, on this new principle, of all that ages had been doing? And just in the same way in these papers of Mr Mill's we have continual reference to 'bad' laws and 'bad' institutions, as if every step man had hitherto taken in the way of sociality was a mistake[1]; while what we have offered to us instead is something good indeed, but not new; something which these very laws were made to help, if possible; and to which it is hard to ask us to sacrifice everything else when we have so little certainty of the success of our present moral reformers.

To sum up: practical utilitarianism deserves praise for its efforts to diffuse the means of happiness;

In all that I am saying here I have no wish to deny the measure of truth which there is in the *philosophical* utilitarianism; still less would I grudge to practical utilitarianism the praise which in its sphere is due to it. It is a worthy daughter of

[1] *Util.* pp. 19, 21, 93.

Christianity, whether or not it acknowledges its parentage; and all that I desire of it is, that, satisfied with the merits which it has, it should not claim those which it has not. The systematizing the ideas as to happiness, and the methodizing of action in order to it, in such a manner as to make this practical philanthropy intelligent, is not a task of great difficulty, so long as we bear in mind that it is of no use to refine too much in regard to it, but that a great deal must always be left to sympathy and feeling. There are certain simple items of happiness, or more properly of the means of happiness, which are very irregularly distributed in the world, and are sadly deficient in many cases. We may readily imagine a scheme of happiness for man, so far as these things make happiness: we may do more than this, and suppose certain mental elements introduced as the result of education: and considering that, if we look around, we shall find a large proportion of persons below our standard, we may set ourselves both in thought and action to remedy this. All honour to those who devote themselves to such a task, and shame to those who do not think of it. Though man does not live by bread and shelter alone, he cannot live without them.

The mistake of the practical utilitarianism consists in the consideration that, in place of all the philosophical speculation and study of human nature which (notwithstanding the pressure upon man, and the hard life which in so many respects he has to lead) will continually suggest itself and maintain its interest, there should be substituted a sort of generalization of what I have been above describing, in a region which does not belong to it. The way to act really for human happiness above the region of bread and shelter, is not by making a supposedly

but it steps out of its place when it seeks to confine human thought and action to this one point. In doing this it tends to suppress the variety and fulness of human life, on which happiness

mainly depends.

inductive scheme of the particulars and laws of it, as if it were something independent of the rest of man's nature, but by endeavouring to understand human nature and human life, ourselves and others, and by looking upon happiness as what we and others shall have, to the extent to which we are capable of it, when we are in the state of mind and circumstances which belongs to us, and in which, so far as we can make out, we ought to be. Human nature exists not simply in order to have its wants supplied; it is to be brought out in its variety and its fulness, and it is upon this that its happiness depends. The experience of the humblest of our species, of many upon whom the pressure of life most makes itself felt, gives us a type how this should be. In spite of all the pressure, in the absence almost of bread and shelter, there are developed affections and aspirations quite independent of these wants, and quite as intimate to happiness as these wants are, but of such varied and refined nature that, as I said before, no scheme of paper happiness could ever embrace them, nor could they ever be dealt with by any methodized action for happiness. And as it is for individuals, so is it for human nature in general. In respect of our own happiness we should not, it is probable, *really* consult it the best by always thinking about it; and I see no reason why it should not be the same with our action, as members of the human race, for the happiness of the human race. The proper place of happiness in our view seems to be, that, as matter of direct consideration whether for ourselves or for man in general, it should take its share with a variety of other things no less good; sometimes it may be happiness that is directly in our view, sometimes the doing justice, sometimes the preserving faithfulness, sometimes the aspiring to

higher moral goodness. If these things are good in themselves for us, they are good for all : so far as we are able to believe life not to be a mere scene of distraction, and conduct not a necessary maze, these things will go together and work the same way: whether they *really* do, this life may perhaps never tell us, but we can hardly act on any principle at all without the *belief* that they do.

There is no need then that practical philanthropy, because it is good in its own noble sphere, should put itself into the place of all moral philosophy. It can only do so by lowering our views of human life, and in this way it will not promote happiness, but diminish it.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE SCIENTIFIC CHARACTER OR METHOD OF UTILITARIANISM.

I COME now to speak of the scientific position of utilitarianism, by which I mean its value, as compared with other systems of philosophy, in respect of its method.

Mr Mill's division of ethical schools into *intuitive* and *inductive*. Meaning of 'inductive' as applied to utilitarianism.

The division which Mr Mill[1] makes of ethical schools into *intuitive* and *inductive* has reference to their method, in distinction from their substance. The utilitarian school is that which he designates as inductive. In this opposition however of inductive ethics to intuitive, the word I presume has scarcely the same meaning as it carries in its opposition to deductive: for all systems of ethics are deductive, not inductive, in the sense that the substance of them is made up of deduction and development from certain assumed principles. In this sense utilitarianism is as deductive as any morality of duty, the mass of it consisting in deductions from, and applications of, the principle that right action is that which is conducive to happiness. Such inductiveness therefore as there is in utilitarianism, and which distinguishes it from other systems whose method is intuitive, must consist in the fact that the supposed proof of the utilitarian principle (that right action

[1] *Util.* p. 3.

is that which is conducive to happiness) is a proof by way of observation, not by way of *a priori* judgment[1]: and also in the fact, that our idea of what is happiness is matter of observation.

Under the notion of *intuitive* moral systems, Mr Mill seems to confuse two entirely different lines of thought, schools we may for convenience call them. Of these the one, the sentimental or emotional, satisfies itself with attributing great importance to the subjective feeling: the other, the school of duty, variously named according to its various forms—the school of the rational or juristic moralists, of the realists as to moral matter of thought, or idealists, as from another point of view they might be called—has a strong notion of the reality of facts and relations which the subjective feeling suggests to us, and which reason, they think, makes known to us on other grounds besides. Both schools are noticed by Bentham as hostile to utilitarianism, but the one which he saw and described most clearly as such was the emotional: the other he speaks of under the name of asceticism, in a manner not making it readily recognizable as an important part of human thought. Now of these two schools the former is certainly not less inductive than utilitarianism itself. If we define right action to be action which is in accordance with our feelings of kindness, of fairness, and of generosity, we enunciate a principle which is as capable as the utilitarian principle of being put to the test of observation, and in the substance of our system we afford the same scope for observation as utilitarianism does; the object of observation in this case being not man's feelings of pleasure or pain, but his feelings of kindness and repugnance, of approval and disapproval. Thus when we speak of

Under the term 'intuitive' he confounds together *emotional* and *rational* systems; the latter of which can alone be properly called *a priori* or *intuitive*.

[1] *Util.* pp. 3, 4.

an *a priori* morality distinguished from that which is inductive, we cannot of course mean this morality of feeling, but must mean a morality of the intellect. And the word *intuitive* itself implies, in all its various uses, a simple and native intellectual vision. The real distinction therefore is between the supposed *a priori* morality of reason, in all its forms, which may, if any one likes, be called intuitive morality, and the various systems in which the proof, whatever its nature, is not supposed to be *a priori*.

As applied to the emotional systems, the word 'intuitive' could only signify that they assign no reason for actions: but this would not be a true description of them.

Mr Mill however does unquestionably use the term *intuitive* with reference to the emotional morality. What does he mean then in this case by the opposition of *intuitive* to *inductive?* He cannot mean to claim exclusive *rationality* for utilitarianism, in this sense that, where the emotionalist can give no other reason for the goodness of a supposed action than that he feels or inwardly sees it to be good, the utilitarian can give his reason, namely, that it is productive of such and such happiness. The supposition of the emotionalist speaking thus in regard to the detail of duty, is not one which Mr Mill makes; as he considers rightly[1], that all moral systems give reason for the particular actions they recommend. The question is, In what terms is the reason to be given? what acknowledged principles is it to rest on? And as to this, I cannot see why action for happiness is to be considered exclusively rational (if we mean by *rational* anything more than 'prudent,' 'good in the view of our own self-interest'), rather than action according to feelings which move us, imperatively and convincingly, in one or another direction. Action for happiness is not at all more action by reason (reason here not meaning the *a priori* reason mentioned before, but reason in the

[1] *Util.* p. 3, 43.

conduct of life), than *regulated* emotional action is, however to the unthinking it may look so. It is not therefore as the negation of 'rational' that the word 'intuitive' is applied to the latter in contradistinction from utilitarianism.

The moralists of the last century, who spoke variously of a moral sense or a faculty which they supposed might be made matter of psychologic observation, all supposed that in doing this they were following Bacon and Locke, and setting moral philosophy on an inductive basis in the sense in which I suppose Mr Mill uses the word in opposition to intuition—on principles, namely, of observation, experience, *a posteriori* reason. In fact if, setting aside the truth of one or the other system and comparing only the methods, we consider which of the two systems falls in most with the idea of going only by experience and avoiding anything *a priori*, I think the advantage lies with the emotional system. No fact of experience can be more clear, than that man, whenever he has feelings at all, has feelings of kindness, of fairness, of generosity, of moral approval of some things and condemnation of others; and that these different sorts of feelings, though endlessly various in the particulars, are in substance the same for all men, at least to the same extent that happiness is the same for all men. Against this fact of experience utilitarianism sets the fact or consideration (true perhaps, but in any case, as compared with the other, possessing something of an *a priori* character) that people may feel wrongly, and that, whatever their feelings may be, it is quite certain that no action can be good but such as is promotive of some happiness. By what process of thought a morality which consists in the first instance of the assumption or supposition of a principle like this,

As a matter of fact the emotional systems are more strictly inductive or *a posteriori* than utilitarianism itself, and they are historically connected with the Baconian philosophy.

and then of a course of deduction from it, can be considered to be a morality of experience or observation as against a morality resting immediately on the experience of human feeling, is what I cannot understand.

Utilitarianism therefore cannot claim to be the true system on the strength of its method.

What I am saying here about utilitarianism is not in my eyes a thing which makes it less likely to be true: but it destroys such claim as may have been put forward in its favour on the ground of superiority of method. Indeed the fact that we find Mr Mill here summarily putting on the shelf the morality of psychologic observation, by the side of the *a priori* morality which it was intended to supersede, may well lead us to doubt whether in regard of ethics the distinction between intuitiveness and inductiveness, pre-Baconianism and Baconianism, is of any great importance.

The moralists of the kindly emotions were really utilitarians, and better utilitarians than those who have since assumed the name: the feeling of sympathy was matter of observation to them, as well as the feeling of pleasure and pain to which utilitarianism confines itself.

As I have previously observed, the emotional systems which are concerned with sentiment rather than with conscience, with ideas of kindness and sympathy rather than those of duty, are as much forms of a happiness-philosophy as the system which calls itself utilitarianism. If we imagine papers like these of Mr Mill's, published in whatever might correspond to *Fraser* one hundred years ago, and purporting to explain sentimentalism, or the philosophy of sympathy, and to vindicate it against vulgar misapprehension, we might have arguments used to show that sentiment need not necessarily be irrational, which should be exactly parallel to those here used by Mr Mill to show that reason need not exclude sympathy and feeling. Mr Mill here tries to sentimentalize the methodical happiness-manufacture of Bentham, just as there might then have been attempts to rationalize untrustworthy sentimentalism. Had this process taken place, it is possible the re-

action against the sentimentalism would not have occurred. But in reality, the moralists of the kindly emotions succeeded better in applying the actual truth which there is in utilitarianism, than those who have since assumed the name of utilitarians. The former taking as their first axiom, that an action is good which is done in accordance with our social feelings or instincts, or whatever we may call them, as distinguished from self-regarding and private views, and then, not before, introducing the utilitarian axiom, that action should have for its end well-understood happiness, and that *social* action should therefore not be mere obedience to feelings, but should be intelligent, thoughtful, methodical, knowing and able to describe what it was aiming at—they, so far as they did this, put things in their right order. The order of the later utilitarianism is what we see in these papers: to put first the principle, that action is only good, in virtue of its tending to some happiness; and then, and not before, to introduce in various proportions, up to the very large proportion in which it is introduced by Mr Mill, the *moralizing* consideration that this happiness must be *social* happiness, and not simply private good. As regards the comparative extent to which the one and the other of these kinds of philosophy make morality matter of observation, and in *this* respect likely to grow and improve, the former does so in reality much more than the other. Human feeling of pleasure and pain, —what it is which constitutes human happiness,— is matter of observation to both: but in addition to this, human feeling of liking and repugnance,—what it is that stirs sympathy (also an undoubted fact of human nature),—is matter of observation to the former.

The morality of

I have spoken here of the emotional morality

conscience adds yet another subject for observation in the feeling of approval and disapproval.

which is of a sentimental or sympathetic kind, as distinguished from that which is concerned rather with conscience or moral faculty, because happiness is a more prominent object with the former, being less complicated with other considerations. But what I have said applies to this latter morality also. The constituents of human happiness and the nature of human sympathy are a matter of observation to it as well as to the others; and besides this, the facts of that feeling of liking or repugnance for actions, of approval or disapproval of their doers, which we call the moral feeling, are matter of observation to it alone. So untrue is it that utilitarianism, as distinguished from other systems of morality, is the morality of observation and experience. The reverse is the fact. Utilitarianism confines or excludes observation, giving us assumption instead.

Is the utilitarian principle that 'action is right as it is promotive of happiness' itself an inductive one?

Since then utilitarianism, in face of the experience of human feeling, really meets us as summarily as any *a priori* philosophy could with the positive dictum, 'Whatever people may think or feel, it is quite certain that no action can be right or good except as it is conducive to some happiness,' let us see whether *this* can be considered matter of observation, or is utilitarianism really after all intuitive and *a priori* in making it?

The utilitarian principle, as Mr Mill gives it, is, that action is right as it is promotive of happiness, wrong as it is the reverse. This must either mean that promotiveness of happiness *makes* an action right, or that it is only *one character* of its being so. It does I conclude mean the former, because otherwise utilitarianism would not be any single system as against others: all ethical systems alike, so far as I am aware, allow that right action is felicific, or does tend to happiness. We must then understand

the maxim to mean, that it is promotiveness of happiness which makes an action right.

If then the ideas are thus coincident, are they also identical? Supposing the question put to which the maxim gives an answer, the question, namely, What is right action? is the answer given, as logicians might say, according to the form or the substance? *i. e.* does the answer suppose the question to imply, What do I mean when I use the word 'right,' as to action? what is the definition of the word which should be given in a dictionary? Or does it suppose the question to imply, What is the sort of conduct and action to which the term 'right' applies? If the question is understood in the former sense, and we suppose that 'productive of happiness' is the definition we should give of the word 'right' in a dictionary, it is odd that the word 'right,' as applied to action, should ever have arisen (and the same applies to the word 'virtuous,' and other synonyms of 'right'): a word which in the derivation carries no reference to happiness, and does not seem to belong to the idea of it. If on the other hand, the question is understood in the latter sense, and 'productive of happiness' is intended to describe the course of conduct which as a matter of fact is right; so that, so far as the meaning of the word 'right' is concerned, it is conceivable that some other sort of action *might have been* right, only that we are able to come to the knowledge that this *is* right; then what is the meaning of the term 'right'? for we must have this told us, before we can judge of the truth of the utilitarian maxim, that right conduct is that which is productive of happiness: but this utilitarianism does not tell us.

Either it merely defines the word 'right,' in which case it is difficult to explain how the word arose, and the principle loses significance: or it is intended to recommend a certain class of actions on the ground of their being right: what then is this rightness?

This is no verbal difficulty about the word 'right;' it is the same whatever term we use of any-

thing like the same meaning (as, for instance, 'moral value'), and whatever proposition we make of this kind, in reference to 'productiveness of happiness.' The idea belonging to that term is intelligible; when we put by the side of it the second term, say, 'rightness of conduct,' do we mean these to be two ideas or one? If we mean only to give another expression for 'productiveness of happiness,' of course the *propositional* form is illusory and unmeaning. On the idea of utilitarianism, which this supposition of the meaning of the maxim implies, it would be better for truth that all terms expressing difference in actions should cease to exist, except those carrying with them a plain reference to happiness, as, we will suppose, 'felicific.' Only that in that case there is no reason why felicific action should be *recommended*, rather than that which is not so: there is no other idea of rightness, goodness, valuableness, than that which belongs to itself; and we can use no terms of praise of it further than saying, that it is itself. If felicific action is *better* than that which is not felicific, *why* is it better? It must be this, as the ancient philosophers would have said, by having more of the quality of goodness in it than that which is brought into comparison with it; and this quality of goodness, which belongs to it, cannot be itself: what is it then?

The primary idea of right action is action according to an *ideal*.

Here we arrive at the fact which the less reasoning utilitarians, as Bentham, have apparently endeavoured as much as possible to keep out of their sight, the fact, namely, that morality of whatever form, even the most thoroughly utilitarian, must suppose an ideal of some kind, a moral preferableness of one sort of action to another, which may turn out to coincide with their relative productiveness of happiness, but is not, in the notion of it, the same thing.

But if so, then there is an earlier and higher idea of right action than its productiveness of happiness, namely, its being action according to this ideal. This is what constitutes it right action; this is what is the definition of it.

This ideal cannot be gained from mere experience, though experience is necessary to its development.

We see then that moral philosophy involves the notion of an ideal, of something which, for whatever reason, *ought to be*, as distinguished from what *is*: and of course the notion of an ideal of this kind goes beyond experience. In reality it seems to me that in the whole of modern ethics, of whatever school, there is an effort to reconcile this notion of an ideal with the notion that *now* ethics, like other sciences, must go in the way of experience and observation. I do not see how any amount of observation of what man does can tell us what he ought to do, or what is his 'right action.' We have got about him, what we have got about no other existing thing, the intractable notion of an ideal, or of what he *should be* different from what he actually *is*. On the other hand, how, otherwise than by experience, are we to have any real knowledge? Without data furnished by experience we cannot even *think*. Granting that we may know that there is something which we should be, some way in which we should act, it is absurd to suppose that by abstract or *a priori* thought, irrespective of the circumstances of human nature, we should make out what this is.

Simply *a posteriori* ethics are not ethics at all: simply *a priori* ethics have no application.

The moral difficulty which there is in this respect is not greater than that which there is as to all our thought and knowledge, and I am not going now to try to solve it. I have alluded to it, as causing the struggle which I have mentioned in all our modern ethics. Simply *a priori* ethics have no application, and therefore no significance and no value. Simply *a posteriori* ethics (or what aims at being the ethics

of observation and experience) do not seem to me to be ethics at all: if they had existed from the first, we should have had a science of the production of happiness, another of the pathology[1] of human feeling, &c., but the word 'ethics,' or 'morals' would never have come into use, nor any such words as 'right,' 'good,' 'virtuous'. As it is, the idea which people have always had, and which philosophers have endeavoured unsatisfactorily to meet by partial moral systems which have been in reality one or another of the above-mentioned sciences, has been that of a science of what they *should do*, including of course an answer to the question, Why they should do it: the essence of such a science is the notion of an ideal.

The utilitarian principle, which Mr Mill vainly tries to prove from experience, does really involve an ideal, and is as much *a priori* as any other.

The more thinking utilitarians do not evade the notion of an ideal; they are willing to consider that ethics treat of 'what ought to be,' and that this notion is in some respect different from the notion of 'what is:' but they find it difficult to deal with the notion. Mr Mill in his proof of the utilitarian principle seems to me only to prove (if he does prove it) that as a matter of experience what people desire is the desirable or happiness: not the utilitarian principle as he gives it, that the action which it is right people should do is that which tends to happiness. The principle involves an ideal, to which the supposed proof does not even address itself. The real proof would have to be something of this kind: such action is right because there is nothing else *except* happiness which *can be* the fit and worthy object of human action: whether this is true or not, it seems to be as much *a priori*, as little matter of experience as Kant's dictum quoted by Mr Mill[2], that right action is that action which all other beings,

[1] See above, p. 227.

[2] *Util.* p. 5.

similarly circumstanced, might adopt as the rule of theirs.

Bentham goes further than Mr Mill, and assumes the principle as a necessary proposition.

Bentham can hardly be said to tell us what right action is at all: and in this respect he may be said to proceed in a more *a priori* manner even than Mr Mill. When a man's whole soul is in a thing, it does not enter into his mind that there is any duty in the matter; and Bentham seems as unable to conceive of a man not enthusiastic for the general happiness as of a man *bonâ fide* refusing to recognise utilitarianism, except as to both cases in the unhappy but numerous instances where 'sinister interest' comes in. What he really does is to give a practical philosophy of philanthropy, as he conceived it, for those inclined to it, and to leave any disinclined to it out of consideration. One might almost call him an involuntary emotionalist in acting thus upon the simple instinct, or feeling, of desire for human happiness. The tone of his philosophy is as if the maxim that the rightness of an action is its productiveness of happiness were a necessary proposition. At the same time, since an extreme view of this kind is not unlikely to be hard to distinguish from an extreme one on the other, we are hardly certain that he attaches any idea to the expressions 'we ought to do a thing,' 'we should do a thing,' other than that of man-made sanctions.

Some however have discarded the ideal altogether in their interpretation of the utilitarian formula, making 'right' a mere result

The words in which Mr Mill enunciates the utilitarian principle, namely, 'that right action is that which tends to happiness[1],' seem to imply that with him real rightness or moral value of action is an admitted idea, and that he does not take the principle to mean, as some have done, that action promotive of happiness is a sort of action to which men have agreed to give the name right, good, virtuous, proper;

[1] *Util.* p. 9.

of human contrivance or education.

meaning by these words to convey praise, and meaning by the praise to encourage the doing the actions, because they wish they should be done. On this I am disposed to think that Mr Mill would agree with me in considering that such is not the way in which the human race could act; that language could not be made by contrivance to give the notion that action was valuable for one reason, while the men who made the language had in their minds all the time the notion that it was really valuable for another reason; could not in fact be employed to conceal or disguise the thoughts of the whole human race. Or if we consider language of this kind to be not the result of contrivance, but of education; words such as 'right,' 'good,' 'virtuous,' are universal; the education therefore which gives rise to them must belong to all human civilization. Such education, I consider—and here again I think Mr Mill will agree with me—to be really the bringing out of what in a higher sense is natural to man: by what is 'natural' to *reasonable* man I can only understand the results of such education.

Such a system may be called utilitarian, but it evacuates the notion of 'happiness' no less than that of 'right,' and is no longer an ethical system at all.

It is obvious however that the word *utilitarianism* is as well applicable to those moral systems, so to call them, which do discard the notion of an ideal, considering that 'what we should do' means nothing, that the attaining of happiness (itself a highly ideal notion) means nothing; that there are certain things which people do and must do, namely, take care of themselves and beware of enemies; that society is an organization for these purposes, and that the action which gets the name of 'right,' 'good,' 'virtuous,' is really the action dictated, more or less imperatively, by such society. The existence of this unideal utilitarianism, the utilitarianism of fear and jealousy as opposed to the utilitarianism of hope and

enterprize, seems to me to show how the moral or ideal element may really go out altogether. And it also shows how under the semblance of observation and experience, assumption as bad as the worst *a priori* dogmatism may come in.

Yet it is only this latter utilitarianism which can really claim to be inductive and *a posteriori*.

Utilitarianism then, like many other systems of morals, may be, according to circumstances, either of an idealist or unidealist type, in the sense which I have given to the word *ideal;* that is, it may have most before it the thought of what men should do, and how they, and life, may be made better—may look at ethics as the *ars artium*, and deal with the subject in the imperative mood: or on the other hand, starting from facts instead of aiming to control them, it may look at man in the first instance without expectation of any kind, without any supposition of there being one course of conduct better for him to pursue than any other course, and see if the facts themselves suggest that there is such. Utilitarianism of the latter or less idealist form, which, looking indifferently at the facts, and seeing that pleasure and pain are prominent among them, proceeds by methodical observation to determine the laws and higher facts about such pleasure and pain, with the view that, when such science is constructed, it will furnish an art of life to those who may wish to avail themselves of it—utilitarianism of this form represents the inductive science of morals which many are now anxious to introduce as a part of the general Baconian reform of science. Utilitarianism in the more idealist form in which Mr Mill defends it, though it is ready enough to lay claim to the scientific prestige attaching to this latter, is really as different from it in method as any other kind of ethical system could be. It is of course only

the idealist utilitarianism that can be enthusiastic and reforming.

Mr Mill's neo-utilitarianism is distinguished from other forms of utilitarianism in being more ideal, more *a priori*, and at the same time more emotional.

If we investigate more particularly Mr Mill's neo-utilitarianism, we shall find that it is distinguished from the old utilitarianism just in this respect, that it is more ideal, more *a priori*, more emotional. To the general *a priori* axiom, that an action is right in so far as it is productive of happiness, it adds another, equally *a priori*, as to the distribution of our action for happiness, viz. that we are bound to act impartially for the happiness of all; and then this happiness itself is idealized, and we are taught to distinguish between a higher and a lower happiness. So when Mr Mill tells us that the social state is not only habitual to man, but also natural and necessary, and demands that the action of each should be that of one who feels himself thus a member of a community; he appears to me in this to make duty an *a priori* condition of the existence of the idea of man as an intelligent and associative being. It is a thing we might know beforehand, that if men are to associate together, they must recognize mutual duty: in other words, association which implies intelligence and is not mere juxtaposition contains in it the notion of mutual duty. Again, utilitarianism in the new garb which Mr Mill gives to it throws off very much of the merely rational character, which was its charm with some of his predecessors, and becoming more vague and wide gives full scope to emotion and sensibility. I have already frequently had occasion to refer to his language on the subject of sympathy, and in what he says of conscience he seems to come very near to that 'thing' which Bentham derided some people as saying that they had within them, 'which would tell them what was right and wrong[1].'

[1] *Princ. of Mor. and Leg.* ch. II.

I must keep in the reader's mind that in using the word *ideal* I mean something very general, equally applicable to a morality of duty, or of virtue, or of happiness. Whether it be a rule to go by, an end to be gained, or a character to be attained to, which is in the man's mind, each is alike ideal, that is, it is something beyond fact, and something which observation of itself will not lead him to. Ethics, to be anything, *must* be philosophy as distinguished from simple fact, must be *rationary* (i.e. interested in the *reasons* of facts) as distinguished from *positivist*. Mr Mill, so far as I understand him, considers that utilitarianism, the supposedly right form of ethics, is not, as to its main method, inductive as opposed to deductive, but inductive as opposed to intuitive. I should rather be inclined to say, that any right form of ethics must be (what he calls) intuitive in the first instance, and then, as to the particulars, must have an observational science, or more than one, dependent upon it, according to which these particulars must be determined. Mr Mill remarks most reasonably on the want of what we may call substance, content, detail, applicability to life, of the absolute or independent morality by itself, as shown for instance in Kant's categorical imperative[1]. The morally ideal or imperative character of this kind of morality he considers equivalent to an intellectually *a priori* or absolute one: and as an alternative and better morality he proposes one with an intellectually *a posteriori* or inductive character, which, in so far as it really had this character, could carry no imperativeness or authority with it, and set before us no ideal. In reality, as we have seen, with all this profession of an inductive, as opposed to the old *a priori*, morality, he assumes, without waiting for any induction, an im-

The true method of ethical science is both intuitive and inductive: the principles are obtained *a priori*, the particulars *a posteriori*.

[1] *Util.* p. 77.

perativeness, or a 'something which *should be*,' quite as much as the most thorough-going *a priori* moralist. Every word that he writes breathes the feeling that the acting for the general happiness, or however he would describe it, is not only something which we find people do (supposing that to be really the case), but is something which they should do, which they ought to do, which in the nature of things they are called upon to do: his morality therefore is as much *a priori* as the other.

The real difference between utilitarianism and the so-called *a priori* schools is not a difference of method, but a difference in respect to the subordinate observational sciences from which they derive their particulars.

Since then the *a priori* assumption that there is something which should be done is common both to Mr Mill and to those whom he calls the *a priori* moralists, it is evident that the real difference of opinion between him and them cannot be a difference as to method, as he would put it. The difference is in fact one as to the nature of the science from which the subordinate details of morality would best be learned. Each moralist would allow the other's *a priori* axiom: Mr Mill would not dispute Kant's rule of generality, or fairness, or whatever we may call it: nor would Kant dispute that one way of describing the manner in which we ought to act might be, that our action should be aimed at producing the greatest amount of general happiness. The utilitarian goes on, Let our auxiliary science then be simply the science of human happiness. I do not know what Kant would have said, but I should feel inclined to say, This science is not enough: I do not think we can keep it separate from other sciences equally connected with human life; I should like, for instance, to investigate the human feeling of fairness, or justice, and its exemplification in the actual laws and social arrangements which human experience sets before us; I should like to study psychologically the human feelings of

faithfulness, and others similar, which seem to me important independently of any consideration of happiness. If utilitarianism is a moral system at all, it is in this region that lies its difference from others: its claim to an inductive method distinguishing it from other systems is delusion.

The utilitarian claim to the inductive method is a vain attempt on the part of philosophy to turn itself into positivism.

The fault of utilitarianism therefore in respect of method consists, according to my view, in its professing and pretending to have a method which it has not and which, if it had, it could not use: a method recommending it, in a way in which other systems cannot be recommended, to the better scientific judgment of our age. It wants to be philosophy and not philosophy, to keep strictly to the positive and to fact, and yet to tell us what we *should do*. It varies, as we have seen, endlessly along a scale between these two, according to its degree of idealism. The simple positivist or matter-of-factist would really as much condemn utilitarianism for being metaphysical in supposing there was any one thing that we *should do* rather than another, as he would agree with utilitarianism in condemning as metaphysical, and as not keeping to ascertainable fact, all the philosophy of inward consciousness. And yet, as we have seen, the philosophy of the faculties and feelings which prevailed in the last century was looked upon as right, in distinction from the philosophy before it, because it was supposed to be founded on experience. In one form after another philosophy tries to gain credit with the advancing scientific spirit by denying itself, and ever tries in vain. I have no fear that philosophy will really die, because, however, in obedience to the supposed exigencies of scientific method, people try to make themselves altogether mentally positivist, they cannot do so: our nature in some respects is better to us than

our will, and preserves the imaginative, ideal, aspiring, tendency within us against all our effort to supersede it. But in the mean time there is caused much waste of thought and language.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PROGRESS.

The idea of progress, as well as that of scientific method, belongs to modern, as distinguished from ancient thought.

THE two thousand years of human change and human effort, which, roughly speaking, have intervened between ancient and modern ethics, were likely of course to produce change of view, or at least to bring new elements of thought into consideration. I have mentioned how it has been a prominent idea of modern ethical writers to make their science follow in the wake of the supposed reform of scientific method which has taken place in modern times; and I have also mentioned the difficulty of uniting the notion of this method with that of an ideal, or of 'something that man should do.' Another prominent particular of thought differencing modern ethics from ancient is the consideration of human change, experience, progress itself. This could not enter into the mind of the ancient moralists any more than the notion of a method of observation and induction, as better than one of simple thought and reasoning. It is a difference of view arising, not simply from the fact of so much more time of the human race being passed, but rather from the fact that now we have an acquaintance, such as it is, with the whole of our globe and of the human race.

This idea of the progress of the race is due to

The notion of *mankind* or of the human race was one which could hardly have much significance to the ancient moralists. Christianity, in this as in

Christianity.

other respects anticipatory of the future, first introduced a sort of unity of view in regard of man. When we talk of mankind now, we know the extent and the physical limits of our subject. We cannot (unhappily perhaps) now dream of happier and higher races of men in parts of the earth as yet unknown.

Idealist and unidealist views of progress: progress as improvement, and progress as natural growth.

In its application to ethics, the notion of human progress has taken two entirely different forms, which, though often confused in language, are really almost antagonistic. Progress, according to the one, means improvement: according to the other, it is the stream or course of human nature. The one view, it will be seen, is what I have called *ideal:* the other, the reverse. If we mean by progress improvement, we must have some notion of what (regard being had to man's nature) it is desirable he should be or become; the word *improvement* has no meaning except on the supposition of a better and a worse, of what should be and what should not be. This is the ideal which I have spoken of, and which, however necessary for the formation of it a knowledge of the facts of man's nature may be, that knowledge alone cannot give: what it is that makes one state of human society better than another, must be determined by some considerations not contained in that knowledge. The other view of progress, the unideal, may be said to take man for his own ideal, considering that there can be no other idea of collective human improvement than the growth or onward course of human nature as a matter of fact. Those who hold this view seem to think that, since man in general has taken such and such a course, therefore this course is all that can be meant by human improvement. Such a view is a sort of application, in moral things, of the notion which to so great an extent guides our physical research, that

everything is right or has a reason; a notion which might *there* perhaps be expressed by saying that rightness is determined by fact; but we cannot transfer this notion of rightness to anything in a moral view except upon some considerations of religion.

Of these two views as to human progress the first of course may lead, as it has led, to extraordinary mistake; while the second, from the notion of it, *ought* to lead to no moral results of any kind, and if it is made to do so, they must be wrong ones.

M. Comte's 'sociology' an example of the unidealist view of progress. Such a science if true to itself can never tell us what man *should* do.

The idealist view may be seen in its greatest strength in those philosophers who have (nobly, very often, if mistakenly) persisted in seeing in the successive events of history an advance nearer and nearer to a state which they have variously characterized, according to their degree of aspiration and hopefulness, some as a perfection of the human race, all as a state much above what it has seen as yet. The unidealist view may be seen best in such a notion as that which M. Comte has of the future science of *sociology*. From simple observation of human history and circumstances, raised into higher and higher generality by inductive method, is to arise a science to direct and guide human action. That a science may thus arise, I can understand: but I cannot understand how it should be able to tell us what man should do, except on the assumption of one or another axiom (whereas it is supposed nothing of this kind is assumed), upon which the science will really rest, at least as much as on the induction so prominently put forward. And any such assumption will give an *ideal:* it will destroy the positivism or supposed Baconianism which is to be the charm of the new science, and raise a question which must be discussed upon grounds very much like *a priori* ones.

It can throw no light on duty or improvement except through an unavowed metaphysical assumption.

The assumption might be, that general human feeling in different ages and countries was a test of what was good, of what *should be*, and that it should therefore direct our action: or it might be (and most probably with M. Comte would be) that later human feeling and thought was to be preferred to earlier, on account of the above mentioned idea of *growth:* but whatever it was, some reason would have to be given why it was one of such supposable axioms rather than another: and of what nature could such a reason be? In giving it, we plunge into all the ethical difficulties which it is the object of positivism to avoid. In keeping to the observation and description of facts, particular or general, positivism is in its place, and may call itself, if it will, a philosophy, though in that case it must be distinguished from what I have called[1] a *rationary* philosophy, which takes interest in the *reasons* of facts. But in telling us that we should do one thing or another, without giving us a reason why, positivism is not only non-rationary, but is irrational; it comes into the province of reason, and does not know how to behave itself there. When M. Comte tells us that, *because* the world as a matter of fact (as he thinks) has proceeded through various other stages of thought till it has come to positivism, we ought *therefore* to be positivists and help on positivism, I wish to understand the 'because' and the 'therefore,' or, as logicians would say, to know the major proposition of the syllogism. Why may not the departure of the old theological and metaphysical ideas have been a loss to human nature, and our best duty be to try to bring them back? M. Comte, pretending to go on *fact* only, and assume nothing, *does* assume. What comes last is best. Supposing this to be so, it is

[1] See above, p. 275.

certainly no matter of fact, but a metaphysical dictum which wants proving, just as the perfectibility of human nature, or anything else a man might assert, would want proving. M. Comte, leaving positivism for a short time, might give reasons; but then he must listen to counter-reasons, and we enter into a metaphysical discussion on what human progress is. If he says, In physical thought the last is the best: we must have some reasons as to moral and metaphysical thought, for concluding that they follow the same analogy.

Idealist and unidealist views of progress are apt to borrow each from the other.

I have said that these two views of progress are very constantly confused: in fact the holders of either of them are very apt to come into the middle ground, and, contrary to their principle, to incorporate much from the other. Any on either side practically in earnest must do this. Hence the idealist who maintains the perfectibility of human nature will be led, in his impatience, to bring his ideal very poorly down, and to preach as perfection a state in respect of which his hearers are puzzled to see that in happiness or anything else it is any improvement upon the present. And hence also the positivist or non-idealist will, as from Mr Mill's papers the reader will see M. Comte does, make even positivism and matter-of-factism (that is, the refusal to take account of anything else in things except that they *are*) into a religion capable of exciting enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm of a philosopher like Mr Mill[1]. On principles of idealism we come thus perhaps only to a dull and vain glorification of that which happens now to be, and on principles of positivism or worship of fact we come to grand anticipations of the future.

Thus far I have endeavoured to show that the

[1] *Util.* p. 48.

positivist philosophy of progress cannot supply a practical morality; that, if it attempts to do so, it becomes self-contradictory, involving metaphysical and idealist considerations like any other system. I shall now look at the matter from another point of view, and inquire what has been the real cause of human improvement.

In practice all improvement flows from the belief in an ideal.

Human progress, so far as it is improvement, is and has been the result of human effort. It does not come of itself, it is not a natural development bearing an analogy to physical growth. It may be called natural in so far as that it is the nature of a being like man to make efforts after his own improvement, but he will not progress or improve unless he does so.

Improvement involves an ideal, that is, a notion of a better and a worse. And in the same manner as improvement itself, so the judging, in retrospect, what is improvement, involves such an ideal also.

The ideal is suggested by the feeling of liberty.

This notion of an ideal, and the feeling of liberty as it is understood by many moral writers, may be considered to be the same thing: man has not only will, but has full and deliberate consciousness of himself as a free agent: he is conscious at once of there being the power in him, and the necessity upon him, of choice: he may not only do, but in a great measure be, what he pleases, in some respects at once, in some respects by slow degrees. This liberty is, in the very notion of it, a looking by man beyond anything which is merely a condition of his nature. So far as such liberty exists, it is his *nature* to *make* his own nature, his own self, his own course of action. And such liberty must involve an ideal, something for the liberty to look to: for it is not caprice, it is choice; it supposes reason why one thing should be done, and not another.

The correctness of

That there exists thus for man an ideal, as well

as a simply actual, nature and course of action; that such a notion is reasonable and not mere self-delusion; in other words, that improvement is possible for man, individually and collectively, does not, it is true, admit of logical proof to any who choose to say that the case is not so; but it requires to be supposed in order to give reason or place to anything which can be called ethical science. Against a simply positivist view, that what is, is right, and what comes last is best, or progress (in so far as we choose to use the words),—against such a keeping to experience as this, there is nothing to be said except that man, as a fact, has all his powers and action to dispose of, and that there is nothing in this view to guide him as to the disposal of them. The feeling of our being free; the feeling of there being a meaning and reason in things, to which our action may correspond; the feeling that thought or knowledge rules actuality or reality, and is not merely a sort of accidental circumstance or result of it[1]—this feeling, one in many forms, which

this feeling cannot be proved, but where it does not exist moral terms have no meaning.

[1] The Author here contrasts what in the *Exploratio* he calls the *phenomenalist*, or positivist, and the *philosophical* views of the universe. The former is described as that view of the universe 'according to which its being known to any body is an inessential accident of it: existence is the fact, knowledge the possibility which may supervene,' *Expl.* p. 10. The latter, his own, view is expressed in the passages which follow:

'The phenomenal universe, as conceived by us, is a sort of deposit from our thinking nature,' p. 46. 'The original fact to us, the one thing of which we are, before all others, certain, is not the existence of an universe of which we, as organized beings form a part, but the feeling, thinking, knowing, that this is so, and the knowing that we do know it, or in other words, that we who know it are anterior, in our own view of ourselves, to it,' p. 84. 'The *thinghood* of a thing is the proper *thoughtness* of it, what it is rightly thought to be: the right thinking of it is indeed on the other side the thinking of it *as it is*, but the two do not exactly counterdefine each other, because *mind comes first*—the cardinal point of philosophy in my view: the thing as thought, pre-contemplated by the Creator, contemplated by beings with created faculties of knowledge with such following of his thought as they can attain to, is the idea, the ideal thing, the ideal reality,

suggests to us an ideal of action, is what (I suppose) exists in some men, and the correctness of which can never be demonstrated to those in whom it does not exist. But where it does not exist, I cannot think that the words, improvement, advance, progress, ought, should, and many others, have any meaning.

The assumption that the natural course of things has a right to guide our

There is a sophistical confusion in a good deal of positivist reasoning between two notions, the one, that we are not really free, but that our action is itself part of a course of things; the other, that we are free, but that the course of things, and growth of

the truest reality,' p. 188. 'We are, for physical and physiological study, one species of animal upon the earth, the highest that we know....We may study the facts of our own nature...in our place in the universe, as we may study any fact of any nature, phenomenally. But we are and we cannot help really feeling ourselves, for purposes of philosophical and moral study, not *this*, but something different—what I should call 'higher'...We feel ourselves as having a free consciousness, a disposition to look at things generally, a curiosity or love of knowing, a disposition to do things for a purpose and to try to do them well; all which, with kindred feelings besides, makes us occupy in our own view the position, not of animals..., but of observers of the relation between ourselves and this universe, with its existence subordinated to ours, believing in it not because we are inferior to it but because we *think* it, judging about it as well as studying it, and when we are settling upon our action, thinking from this free point of view what is worth doing, what wants doing, what it is well should be done,' pp. 178, 9.

The words which follow shortly afterwards in the text, 'this feeling is what (I suppose) exists in some men,' may be illustrated from the Author's 'philosophical reminiscence' given in p. 146 of the *Exploratio*. 'The idealism, personalism, or whatever it may be called, which lies at the root of all that I have said, is not simply a doctrine or opinion, but seems to me to have been my earliest philosophical feeling, and to have continued, if not so vivid, yet not less strong, ever since. Experience in these things is all individual, but what, from my own, I should guess is, that that phenomenalism which seems to us to be everything, that world which is too much with us, that nature or universe into which, as time goes on, we seem to sink all our independent *selfhood* so as to be only parts of it—the highest animals in it—is something in a manner which we required to get used to; and that before this familiarity is complete, in earlier years, there is a disposition in us to be struck with what I may call our personal or conscious difference from it, or independence of it, or however else we may style the *individual* feeling: this is what is with me the root of philosophy.' Ed.

human nature, makes it in a manner our duty or wisdom to direct our action by it. So far as we are not free, all morality is of course precluded; we need not discuss what we should do, if we are not our own masters so as to be able to do it. But at any rate we inevitably consider ourselves free: even supposing that this is a mere self-delusion, and that some course of things, unawares to us, is all the while directing us—even then there is no reason why we should ourselves seek to forego our freedom by acting (necessarily) according to a course of things of which we seem to be independent, and the existence of which gives it no authority over us. It is possible that the great course of human nature may carry all our individual action with it: if that is so, it will be so, however we seem to act and whatever we aim at: but this is no reason why, to the extent to which we seem to ourselves free, we should direct our action to what we may conceive to be this course. In attempting to do so, we are going out of our sphere into one that does not belong to us. What is to be, will be, whatever we do. An ideal is 'what should be,' and not 'what is to be,' any further than as 'what is to be' is felt by us as what should be.

free action (or what seems such) is a confusion of two distinct views.

Whatever may be the value of M. Comte's views in themselves, there is no doubt that he puts into a sort of scientific language what there is a widespread tendency to think, namely, that man becomes more Epicurean and positivist as he becomes generically older; that in the actual course of human intellectual movement, the positive element thrusts out and supersedes the ideal, whatever form this latter may take, whether religious (or, as most of those who look with complacency on its supposed disappearance would say, 'theological'), or poetical,

It is not true that the idealistic elements of human nature tend to disappear with the advance of civilization.

or metaphysical, or whatever it may be. I regard this as a conclusion from limited observation, and as the reverse of the truth, except in so far as the notion that it is so tends in some measure to realize itself, and in so far also as something of the kind may be brought about by various secondary causes.

This has been suggested by the false analogy between the life of the individual and the life of the race:

This notion is commended to the minds of many by a supposed analogy between the historical life of the human race and the life of the human individual; a supposition which seems to me to be one of the greatest fallacies which we can import into our view of history. And, singularly enough, owing to their several tones of mind, it is very much its nature to recommend itself alike to those who are glad of, and to those who deplore, the supposed process. The religious man, the poet, the philosopher, constantly looks back upon the past with an affection which makes him think the present worse than it (as *he* would mean the word worse), and when the positivist or man of fact tells him that this is the way in which things are really going, he is just as ready to believe it, as the other, from his limited range of observation, is ready to form the notion.

and the belief has been further aided in regard to religion by the confusion between positivism and secularism.

In reference to theological ideas especially, this supposition of the vanishing of idealism, with increasing civilization, is further encouraged by the confusion between positivism and that which is frequently called 'secularism.' By this term I understand that want of religious sentiment in the first instance, that want, more widely speaking, of elevation of mind and of earnestness, which is very likely to exist in an advanced state of civilization. This is really something quite distinct from intellectual positivism, that is, from the notion that religious ideas, and others perhaps with them, are incompatible with right views of nature. At no

period has what we call the civilized world been more secularist, less under the influence of religious or theological sentiment, than in the peaceful period of the Roman empire, a century after our era. And at no time also has there been less interest in physical science, less intellectual positivism. But because in our time the two feelings to a certain degree co-exist they are often assumed to constitute one feeling which man in his progress tends to.

How it is that civilization tends to bring out both.

I do not think it is true of either of these characters of mind that it belongs properly to a later stage of human progress rather than to an earlier one: but there is a tendency in civilization to bring out both of them; a tendency which, as regards positivism, seems to me bad in excess, in regard to secularism, bad altogether. This is a part of that great difficulty which we have to face in thinking of the improvement of human nature; the difficulty, namely, that with the material improvement of human condition we lose elements which, however undesirable in themselves, have effect in bringing out many high and noble qualities. In regard to this it should be remembered that these qualities may be brought out otherwise, and that therefore there is no actual necessity for their disappearing in the improved state of things. If they do disappear, it will be a question how far we are entitled to describe the progress made as real improvement rather than the reverse.

Really the idealistic elements have been strengthened with the advance of civilization.

In reality however it seems to me that, so far as we can have the notion of an unitary course of human history, and of our best present civilization as the goal or utmost point which man has as yet attained to, the mind of man is now richer, fuller, more developed, than it was when history first enables us to know about him, not only as to positive science, in which we can distinctly trace the line

of progress, but as to those elements which I have comprehended under the term ideal, in which according to the view of positivists it has been going round in ceaseless dispute. If the case were as they describe it, I should not think there had been improvement: that it is otherwise, I think is due, not to any necessary development or merely natural course of events, but to man's continued efforts to improve himself, whatever value in addition we may be disposed to assign to supernatural aid given him by revelation.

The growth of the race differs from that of the individual through the succession of new beginnings combined with the inheritance of what is old.

It seems to me a mistake to consider that the past experience of the human race has acted upon it in the way rather of sifting and correcting, or in fact what I should call impoverishing, than in the way of enriching and emboldening; that it has been such as to teach humility to man's intellect rather than enterprize and confidence; that it has shown scepticism, or disposition to doubt and examine, to be a more valuable intellectual element than imagination, and disposition to theorize and generalize; that there is really any analogy between the experience of the human race and that process which is supposed (and supposed probably much more generally than the facts warrant) to go on in individuals, namely a replacement, with increasing age, of imagination and apparent illusion by an attachment to matter of fact. There is no *natural* reason to suppose in human nature the double movement which belongs to individuals, towards an end as well as from a beginning. Mankind is ever being fresh renewed. We are all born new, ignorant, untamed, as if, so far as we are concerned, the world was just begun. Whatever physical difference there may be between the infant of civilization and that of savage life, it leaves untouched a very large amount

of resemblance. And the true progress or improvement of human nature seems to me to arise from the fit mixture of this ever fresh youthfulness, in spite of all its accompanying ignorance and almost savageness, with the experience and the maturity which from one generation to another has been increasing.

Some of the most valuable elements of human nature, though contributory to progress, are themselves unprogressive.

In this respect, along with the progressive, the unprogressive elements of human nature are not without their value and their charm; or rather we might perhaps better call them the elements which do not constitute progress, but cause and animate it. In one point of view, man may be described as a being whose nature is slowly changing, what we call civilization being the main agent in that change. But we shall be led into error in saying this, if we do not consider along with it that, in another point of view, man's strength, like that of Antæus, consists in not letting himself be lifted away from those great roots and foundations of his nature which, whatever he may grow up to besides, he must constantly keep hold of. In regard to his intellectual and moral progress, he must not think that his past experience is something done with, that it is all mistake, and only of use as warning. Our main practical interest being of course in the future, as the sphere in which our action lies and our will must work, there is sure to be a tendency in us to grow weary of the past, to misapprehend the nature of progress in this respect, and consider that there is something disheartening in the supposition that we are only after all repeating in our experience now something which, under another form perhaps, has already existed. We had rather have in all respects a linear progress than a cyclical movement.

All progress is not marked by

In speaking however of the unprogressive elements of human nature, we must not forget that, in

that perpetual novelty and change of view which are associated with physical science.

many particulars in which it has been assumed by some that there has been no progress, there has really been progress most important, though, it may be, not of the same kind as that for which the name of progress is often exclusively arrogated. There is a tendency in many to look on physical science as we look to the manager of a theatre or to the sessions of parliament, as bound to show their life by supplying us with something new; novelty, not truth and use, being what we thus look for. But there is no necessary progress, no improvement, in mere novelty, or change of view. Perpetual change of view has no value in itself; it is only good as an approximation to truth; on the supposition, that is, of an ideal which we are progressing towards. When the natural curiosity or healthy appetite after truth, ever disappointed indeed but not the worse for disappointment, ever seeing further summits beyond the one which it has been struggling up, becomes altered into the mere notion of eternal change of view under the name of progress, and into a curiosity after mere novelty, this shows there must be something wrong in the whole conception which we have about the matter. That so much *change* of intellectual view has to take place in our progress in knowledge, is *of itself*, that is, irrespective of the consideration of its being an advance towards full knowledge or truth, in many respects a misfortune rather than an advantage: if we could keep up, along with the new knowledge, the thought which had led to it, and the interest attaching to that thought, if the new knowledge at each point did not change our minds so much as it does, we should be intellectually the better for it.

Still man is now richer

I feel myself no doubt that man's mind is richer now *ideally*, in the sense which I have given

to the word, as well as positively (by which latter I mean in respect of actual and methodized knowledge of nature), than it was two thousand years ago. To recur to the case which I have already mentioned, we are all aware how, beneath the surface of the secularism which prevailed under the Roman empire, a mighty reinforcement to the religious feeling of the world was quietly working: and it seems to me, so far as we can judge at all from history, that, with revelation and without it, religious feeling, whether in true and good forms or in bad and erroneous ones, goes on and continually breaks out afresh, leaving as the result on the whole that mankind is *more* religious, not less so, than in its earlier days. And so again in regard to the non-positivist elements of human thought as they are connected with imagination and poetry. Anything which diminishes the elevation of human thought will lower also human imagination; and there are some elements of civilization, as we have seen, which do tend to do this. Intellectually also, human imagination loses the faith which it ought to have in itself, in the face of the loud boastings of advance which are made in behalf of the knowledge of fact, and thus becomes open to a host of secondary causes which stop and nip and chill it. Still it seems to me that such weakening of the imaginative powers as is produced by civilization is not a necessary result of it, but a bad one, which need not be yielded to.

ideally than he was 2000 years ago: religious feeling has a constant tendency to break out afresh; and though civilization *may*, yet it need not, check activity of imagination.

In regard to morality, which is our main concern, if we compare the mind of a man of thought and feeling now with the imagined mind of a man of the Roman period to which I have just alluded, and this again with the imagined mind of a man, say in Greece, a thousand years before, which is certainly as far back as we can go, it seems to me, that so far

With regard to moral philosophy there has been marked progress in the last 2000 years.

from man's mind being less richly furnished now, it is vastly richer than it was then: the old is not worn out and lost without replacement, but man has in reality gone on adding to his stock, so that it is better now than ever. There is not indeed that sort of progress to show which physical science can show; for it is not in the nature of the thing that there should be. There is not therefore the same means of *proof* of improvement to those who feel inclined to deny it. In fact, to those who are unwilling to admit the notion of an ideal at all there is nothing to be said: the parties must remain separate, with their own thoughts and feelings. But thus much we may at any rate assert: man now, comparing him in the manner which I have just mentioned with man at two previous periods, thinks *differently* on moral subjects from what he did then: this difference may be described as his having various ideas now which he had not then: he has now the distinct idea of duty; he has the idea of a work to do going beyond himself; he has the idea of an universal philanthropy; he has the idea of general human improvement as an object to strive after,—general improvement, in the very lowest view of it, of human happiness; he has the feeling of value for his word, of respect for women, of self-devotion for worthy ends, and other feelings of the kind, to a degree which in those times was unknown. I am not now considering how he got these; he is morally the richer as having them.

Utilitarianism itself is an instance of this.

As one proof that man's moral view has become generally more idealist, and, as I should call it, richer and fuller, I must confess I regard the present form of utilitarianism. If we look upon it, as it looks upon itself, in the character of the representative of the old Epicureanism, the difference is striking. The enlarged philanthropy which now belongs to it, the

lofty ideal of a possible general human happiness, the notion (most unscientific, it is true) of intermeasurable *qualities* of happiness—these, and many things more, are elevations of view which the passage of years has brought to it. And not only Epicureanism thus, but even positivism itself, attempts to make itself ideal, reintroduces in place of the old theology a religion of its own, and, for activity of idealism or dreams of human improvement, quite disputes the palm with doctrines to which such notions should more logically belong.

This improvement of moral view is not adequately measured by the improvement in practice which has taken place.

This greater elevation and fulness of man's moral view is not the same thing as practical moral improvement. It is of course very likely to contribute to this latter, but how far it brings it about depends on various circumstances. Both intellectually and morally there is another point of great interest for us to know besides the degree in which the collective mind may be better furnished, namely, the diffusion of this better feeling and knowledge. In the most civilized countries, such change of view as the advance of physical science involves, affects a limited number only. When we turn to the moral change, since it is in reference to the *many* that we must speak of practical moral improvement, we cannot wonder that we do not find this latter so great as perhaps we should have expected. But no one, I think, has doubted that there is actual improvement to a certain extent.

Progress in intelligence is shown by intensification as well as by increased extent. The former has a specia

Anything fit to be called an *improvement* of man as regards his intelligence, must consist not only in a continuous change for the better in his view of nature, but in an advance also in his manner of conceiving things, of reasoning about them, and in general of exercising his powers of thought and imagination. But progress of the latter kind cannot show

terest as connecting together the earlier and later stages of knowledge.

itself in the same distinct manner as progress of the former kind. It is intensification or, as I have called it, greater fulness and enrichment of the already existing, rather than such change as we can readily follow. Hence if change and novelty are all we are interested in, it may seem like no progress; but to those who think, it will involve, more than these do, one element of the idea of progress or growth, namely the identification of the successive stages in one reality. Allow to the change of view, which enlarged physical knowledge produces, all the interest attaching to change of place, for instance, in our individual life. So far as the collective human consciousness is concerned, intelligent man may be said to live now in a different physical world from that in which he lived two thousand years ago: he lived then, as to his imagination, in a flat plain of small extent vanishing in each direction into cloud and ocean, with celestial luminaries rising and setting to his view and moving by quite different laws from any which concerned him on earth: he lives now on a round globe, or island in space, from which he looks round on other similar islands, making up a universe all following the same laws: it is as if he had come into another land: the old exists no longer for him, except as matter of history. But the improvement of his moral view is a change which preserves to him the interest of his old home. Though all is exalted, yet he is aware that it is the same: the ideas have always belonged to him, though it is only by degrees that he has become distinctly conscious of them. He has, in the course of his collective experience, been exploring the world of his own moral being; just as, physically, he has been coming to the knowledge of the globe he inhabits. Or, more accurately, he has been filling out and enriching the idea, which he has

always more or less had, of something different from what he is, which nevertheless he has always felt he might and ought to become.

Improvement in man's moral view does not lead to demonstration. The study of which the subject is the action of free beings must always remain philosophy, and cannot take the form of mathematical or physical science.

There is another respect in which the improvement in man's moral view has less the appearance of progress than his advance in physical knowledge: unlike the latter it does not leave behind it, as it goes on, regions conquered to certainty, about which no further discussion can arise. It remains philosophy rather than science: and hence in the view of its opponents it is always in making, nothing is ever made. Here again we come to an issue, in regard of which there seems to be no real principle upon which the different notions can be compared. Suppose we admit that it is so, and say that it is no fault in our eyes, and that still there is progress; progress not linear, of which we can mark the steps, but progress of intensification, keeping and exalting the old, not leaving it behind as done with:—if our adversaries do not choose to allow this sort of progress, I do not see that there is anything to say, except that we do. Thought in the human mind (which is necessarily something of a sort of conflict) and discussion (which is its outward or social counterpart) are not, like war, of themselves evil, and only valuable for the certainty and the peace which they result in, so as to make a state of unthinkingness desirable for the human mind, as a state of peace is for human society: they are man's business and his nature. I do not understand how people can have supposed that human action with all its infinite complication should ever be other than a subject of thought and discussion, or that any assumption of single principles could render such thought and discussion unnecessary. I do not see how 'what we should do' can be

the subject either of an exact quasi-mathematical science or of an inductive quasi-physical science. What we mean by the former is matter of calculation and measurement; what we mean by the latter is experience and observation: our duty in some degree lends itself to the former, our feelings in some degree lend themselves to the latter; but in neither case to such a degree that we can exhibit any match to mathematical and physical progress. But does any one care that we should? Would human action gain or lose in interest by being supposed purely matter for mathematical and physical laws? Is not human *liberty* here our subject, and ought not our thought about it to involve such determination of action as is consistent with liberty, namely, not by laws like the above, but in the way of what I have called an *ideal?* And as we should never wish, I suppose, to attain to such knowledge on these subjects that all our actions should be done instantly and infallibly by some evident mathematical rule, or by some immediate movement of our nature without thought on our part; as we would wish still to be conscious and free; so I do not see how, till we remove choice from action, we can remove doubt from thought about action. In this respect consideration about human action will always remain philosophy rather than science. Progress here will consist, not in the successive laying down one position after another, but in the stronger and fuller feeling of our freedom, in the feeling that we have powers, that we may do work and effect purposes with them, and that, in proportion as this is so, our action must be to us a subject of care and anxiety; and next, in the forming a better and fuller notion of what we may do, and ought to do.

Progress here must

In this view a part of our notion of the improve-

ment of human nature must be an increase in it of what I have called the 'ideal element:' in other words, there must be a greater fulness of consciousness, a greater richness of imagination, and a greater earnestness of enquiry and of effort. Something of such a change has I believe taken place; and if we wish for *more* improvement, we must make this element of it a distinct part of our aim. Probably many will agree in part of what I say here, but will disagree in part, thinking that 'increase of the ideal element' does not well describe what has taken place; and in any case that there is no increase, but a deadening, of *imagination*, the increase such as it is being in *consciousness* and in prosaic matter-of-fact earnestness. This is a part of the notion of the analogy between the mental growth of the race and the supposed mental growth of the individual which I have more than once disclaimed. It seems to me to arise, not from primary and necessary, but from secondary and accidental causes, that what we consider the imaginative part of human nature grows duller as civilization advances. I do not think it does so in itself, and if it did, I think reason would grow weaker and duller too. But there is a change in the manner of appreciating the utterances of man's mind; they are received and looked at less simply; and hence there is a difference in form and outward appearance which to a certain degree may make a difference in spirit, but to a greater degree makes us think there is one, even when there is not.

consist mainly in the increase of the idealistic element:

In respect of the moral portion of the ideal element, it certainly seems to me that man is a higher being, a higher animal, a being, if we may so speak, of higher value and importance in the universe, and therefore also happier as capable of a higher happiness, the more he is conscious of his free-will and

in an increased consciousness of freedom and of duty.

his powers, as well as of his being his own master in disposing of them; and the more, along with this, he feels himself not at sea as to their disposal, but is conscious of duty to direct him and of an object to work for worthy of all his effort. So far then as anything of this sort has taken place in regard of civilized mankind, man is to be considered, in this particular, improved. And so far as we wish for his further improvement, and take this into our view as a part of the moral object for us to work for, we must do what we can that this kind of feeling may grow in him; that the ideal element, in other words, may be increased; however we may also wish that other elements should be increased besides.

Difficulty of forming right conclusions from the history of human progress. Falsehood of the 'logique des faits.'

Whether or not we think what human progress has been, we have our duty; and it is very likely that the thought of such progress may not be of importance to it: so far as it is, we must take care that we conclude from the progress rightly; we must understand our principle. Suppose we find one element developing itself very largely, to the prejudice of others, is our principle to be the encouragement of this element, on the ground of its large development indicating its superior value, or rather to encourage the less developed, on the ground that there is value in all, and that the development of the one without the other is not real improvement? It is evident that the progress itself cannot settle this question, that something of an ideal of human nature is necessary for the settlement of it. That the progress itself can and does settle it, is what is shallowly assumed by many. 'Physical science is the one thing in which it is certain men advance, therefore it is advance in physical science which is human improvement.' I want to know the major proposition of this syllogism. The cogency of it in fact

really belongs to that logic which is now not unfrequently spoken of as the 'logique des faits:' a logic which abnegates choice and all that is moral in human nature. To aid the (so called) development of human nature without a distinct view of that development is really only acting in this manner.

Even the philosophers of progress refuse to be bound by the results of past experience.

It is indeed very hard to know how to conclude from the past history of human thought, what we ought to consider as to the proper method of human thought now. The same thing applies to a certain degree in reference to the use of our intellects which I have mentioned in reference to our conduct; the difficulty, namely, of judging from simple experience as to anything which *should be*. Whether the way in which man *has* attained his present position of improvement is the best way in which he *could have* done so; whether again one sort of thing was better in the past, but now that we are wiser something else is better for the future;—with respect to all this I do not see what are the principles on which we are to found our reasoning. The very philosophers who tell us in one breath that we are to form (or to hope that there will be formed) from the study of human experience a science which will be a true and sufficient guide, nay our only possible guide, in morals, in the next breath, when arguments are brought from past experience against anything which they propose (as, for instance, attempt at communistic association among men), take the very different tone of 'Try again, try again; if it is good, it will be done yet:' a tone it seems to me far better and more noble, being in fact the assertion of the ideal against the positive, as I have described them.

Supposing positivism to be right in some subjects,

Granting, therefore, all the apparent resultlessness of the philosophy which has been, the question still remains, whether we should have been where

may it not be premature in others?

we are without it; whether, in other words, it would have been better if it had not existed, and if men had been positivists or matter-of-factists from the first. And this difficulty is one not simply in relation to the past, but in relation to the present. If, as a matter of experience, we have been led to our present happy positivist stage of thought upon certain subjects through various previous stages of imagination and philosophy, may not the same be the road we shall have to take, if we wish to attain to the same consummation of positivism on other subjects likewise? And may not a premature positivism be just what the history of the world, as positivism views it, shows to be wrong? May not positivism as it is doubtless the life of knowledge in regard of application, be the death of it as regards the mind? and as, when coming in its proper place, it is fruitful in respect to action, may it not, in regard of speculative fruitfulness, be as barren in one way as mere imagination in another? In traversing the wide plain of knowledge, it is long before we find the proper track of each kind of knowledge; and when we have found it, it is well that all our thoughts should be devoted to keeping in it, and avoiding the straying into imagination: but should we ever have found it, without the hunting after it which arises from that hunger in the mind after the reasons of things, that dissatisfaction with what we know already as being at all events incomplete and wanting something behind and beyond it, which is really philosophy?

Question as to our right to build conclusions on the present

In regard to all this however, even if we should grant in theory that experience might possibly furnish a law which should direct our actions; still there remains the further question whether the particular experience appealed to is long enough to guarantee

such a conclusion. Mr Mill, who is really far more of an idealist than of a positivist, thinks that as to morals the experience of the human race as yet goes for very little; that we are hardly, in time, past the infancy of mankind, and that its real life is yet to come[1]. Setting aside all notion of actual historical prediction, the future being to us entirely undivinable, there seems to me, in respect of what we may imagine the history of the human race, much more truth and interest in this view than in that which would suppose man to have gone through a long experience, from which he has learnt much. I look with pleasure upon the idea that men in some things are still children, no wiser and no further advanced than in the days of Homer; that the supposed experience from which they are averred to have learnt, or to have had reason to learn, much which in my view is not cheering, is very limited, and not at all sufficient ground for supposing that what they have thus learnt is really the fact.

short experience of the human race.

In regard to physical science, we hear a great deal about the unbounded future which lies before it, how it may indefinitely enlarge human thought, and extend the sphere of human intelligence; and appeal is made to the manner in which it has done so during the last four hundred years. Of course there is truth in this, but it is matter for consideration how much. Doubtless no one can say but that at any moment some unexpected physical discovery may change the whole character of human thought, as to some extent has happened once and again already. But one or two things we do seem to know in respect of future physical science, one or two respects in which the way seems barred up against it. We may be said now to know the whole surface of our

Question as to the progressiveness of physical science itself.

[1] *Util.* pp. 23, 48.

globe, and when a little more has been done in Africa and Australia, there will be no 'undiscovered country' for us even to dream of visiting except that which some day we shall visit all of us. We know also the visible heavens with a knowledge which *in kind* seems hardly alterable, I mean by any alteration similar to that of the Newtonian discoveries, which brought those heavens, so to speak, into the same physical universe with us; we are insulated in our globe, and I suppose shall remain so. Thus when physical science claims to itself an unbounded future of progressive elevation of human thought, though we may grant it indeed a possible unbounded future, for there must always be something more to be discovered, I am not sure whether we have reason to grant it a probable future of great discoveries, changing human thought, like those which have been mentioned, or a progress of this kind. I should not like to speak so much in the dark as one must on this matter, were it not that physical science is apt to claim and suppose for itself this probability, and calling it 'progressiveness,' to assume superiority on this ground over other kinds of science supposed not progressive.

Anticipations of progress really belong to idealism, not to positivism.

I have said that Mr Mill's view on this subject agrees much more with the moral sympathy which he has with idealism than with his apparent intellectual sympathy with positivism. Anticipations of a possibly long, and in any case continually improving, future of the human race, though they may be at this moment very much in the minds of positivists, and of those whose expectation is limited to physical or quasi-physical science, do not seem to me properly to belong to that spirit. They belong rather to that mingled dissatisfaction and hopefulness of human nature in regard of itself, which I have

called idealism, the essence of which I should pronounce to be that no experience will teach it to be contented with matter of fact; to despair, that is, of seeing in things reason and purpose as well as bare fact, and of being able, in regard of important particulars of human nature, not only to know how things go, but in some degree to make them go better.

The actual past progress of physical science has been aided quite as much by a return to the world's youthful spirit, as by the lessons of its mature experience.

Again, with regard to the progress of physical science itself, it must be remembered that while many new rules have been learnt for regulating our method of thinking, still no such change has passed upon the mind of mankind as need prevent the eye of the speculator from being as fresh, his imagination as active, his spirit as enterprizing as in man's earlier days. Take, for instance, the great forward movement in science with which many of us connect the name of Bacon. This was quite as much a deliberate rejuvenescence of the world as a result of its age and experience. Granting what value we will to the supposed discovery and use of new methods of science owing to the proved failure of the old, it still remains that the main fact as to what took place then was this: that men remounted the stream of time; that from Aristotle's commentators, or the Aristotle of the schools, they went to Aristotle's own works, which made the first step of the progress, and then from Aristotle's works to Aristotle's mind, putting themselves in the position of him and his contemporary physical philosophers, and instead of satisfying themselves with reading and building upon him, investigating nature themselves as he and they had investigated it. This return of the world to its youthful spirit of enterprize was in reality a far more important element in the fresh spring of discovery and knowledge at that time, than any learning by experience of better method.

The spirit of criticism, which is connected with this tendency to return upon the past, has nothing sceptical in it.

The spirit of criticism of the records of human experience, in order to understand them and give to them their due value, which accompanies and helps to produce this tendency to return upon the past, is not fitly described by the name of scepticism, nor has it any resemblance to that sort of feeling by which people as they get older get more matter-of-fact and more distrustful, unlearn illusions, break idols, and become what must be called *poorer* in mind, even if in a manner wiser[1].

[1] The rather abrupt introduction of the subject of 'criticism' in this paragraph may be explained by a few quotations (which are given in abbreviated form) from the Author's (unpublished) *Review of Comte and Buckle.*

'Mr Buckle agrees with M. Comte in considering that the collective mind of the human race passes through the theological point of view to the positive; that a great part of the progress of science is simply this liberation from theological ideas; and that the instrument of this liberation is a temporarily destructive principle, called by M. Comte *critique*, by Mr Buckle *scepticism*.'

'Such effect as the course of human movement has had upon the view (we will say) of the Christian religion is of a very complicated nature. There is the effect produced by time, there is the effect produced by criticism, and there is the effect produced by a different view of nature. No sort of attempt is made by M. Comte to analyse the action of these agents.' After speaking of lapse of time and changed physical view, the Author continues, 'The spirit of criticism is the same thing as that which Mr Buckle calls scepticism—the disposition to examine, and the indisposition to believe without examination. A main purpose of Mr Buckle's book is to prove that the great agent and the great fact in the world's improvement is this scepticism.' 'What really takes place is in no respect an increase of the disbelieving spirit in comparison with the believing; but the coarse and unreasoning credulity and scepticism of a barbarous and ignorant state are both toned down, and in some measure blended into what we may call the spirit either of criticism or of discriminating belief.' 'Of course the growth of a spirit of criticism makes religious evidence more difficult by bringing into consideration all the difficulties involved in literature. With respect to its literature, religion stands in face of criticism in the same uneasy and continually shifting position in which we have seen that it stands in face of advancing physical science. And the same pain may be given to individuals in this case as in that. But the history of the world gives no reason to suppose that criticism in literature tends to extinguish religious belief.'—Ed.

I said a short time ago that there was no real connection between positivism as such, and those anticipations of progress in which some positivists indulge. I will stop here for a moment to explain the difference between the intellectual spirit of positivism and the actional principle of conservatism. By positivism I mean interest in matter of fact as distinguished from any judgment about the fact as right or wrong, good or bad, desirable or undesirable, and from any care about the reason or meaning of the fact, except so far as these may be supposed to be further portions of matter of fact. By conservatism I mean an attachment to, and love for, what *is*, and a disposition to maintain this against any attempt on the part of others to alter it. This latter feeling must rest upon considerations which would be excluded by positivism, considerations, for instance, of goodness or desirableness in regard to the fact. Conservatism is constantly of a most ideal nature; the interest which it takes in the present or actual, depends upon the association with this of several notions of a most imaginative and unpositive character. There may however be a merely positivist conservatism arising not from any attachment for the things which it seeks to preserve, but from a want of faith and interest in any attempt at improvement. Such positivist conservatives or natural posivists (as we may call them) are abundant on the face of the earth, as, for instance, the natives of an Arab village, who are utterly unable to conceive what the stranger is about who comes from a far land to excavate with money and toil the ruins among which they have been always living. What is required in order to improve them, and elevate them above the condition in which they have been for the last thousand years, is to wake an imaginative interest in

So far from leading to progress, positivism is the philosophy of stagnation. Barbarians are natural positivists.

what to them is simply prosaic and positive, to call up a feeling of faith in themselves, a hopefulness of being able to bring about something of that improvement of material condition at any rate, which even to themselves would appear an object worth striving after. I cannot see that the case is much altered in our civilized times. If you dry up man's imagination and give him no worthy object for his powers, nothing to call out his hopefulness and his faith in himself, he would be, in my view, as to the main part of his nature, unimproving and in a state of stagnation, though his physical knowledge were carried to any extent to which ever new instruments and ever fresh observations might carry it. And it would remain to be shown by human experience, whether this latter would really go on in the stagnation of the other, or whether the times of the Roman empire would come again.

Recapitulation. Improvement up to this time has been due to the idealist elements in man: if these disappear, he will cease to improve.

Briefly then to recapitulate the views which I have put forward in this chapter; the human race, so far as we may speak without reference to Divine Providence, is in the main master of its development, as each man of his action. There is no moral logic which will teach us to conclude what should be, in the great features of it, from what has been and what is: if we do so conclude, it is in the manner which I have mentioned, which destroys all our moral being. Man has improved as he has, because certain portions of his race have had in them the spirit of self-improvement, or, as I have called it, the ideal element; have been unsatisfied with what to them at the time has been the positive, the matter of fact, the immediately utilitarian; have risen above the cares of self and of the day; have been imaginative in thought, enterprising and not to be daunted by any disappointment in action, and deep and earnest

in feeling. And if this is so, then continuance in improvement with them must be the going on with the same mass of feeling with which it has begun. As man presses, so to call it, against that which resists his improvement, it seems to be the fact that it is in the direction of physical science that this most yields, and that he makes most distinct way: but I do not therefore conclude that it is in this direction alone that his path of improvement lies. On the contrary, if what his experience teaches him is to give up the imaginativeness, the deep and unsatisfied thoughtfulness, the desire to penetrate to the reasons of things, the hopefulness of becoming a worthier and higher creature, which have been his main impellers thus far; if it teaches him to be content with the idea of knowledge as the registering of facts, lower and higher, and as what, rightly used, may benefit his material condition; if this is what he learns from experience, he will, I think, cease to improve. If he had acted on this principle from the first, he would never have begun to improve.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON THE MORALITY OF PROGRESS.

'Sociology' (a new name for an old thing) may furnish details, but not a foundation for morality.

M. COMTE proposes, for our moral guide, a new science, the subject matter of which is to be human experience methodically and inductively reasoned on: the science is to be called 'sociology.' In respect of the general view of such a science, experience, as I have said, can give us no principle to determine what we *should* do. In respect to its particulars, such a science, the science of human nature as it has been and is, may well be of the utmost importance (besides its positive or scientific value), to give content, and applicability, and reality, to the moral ideal when formed; but I see little use in proclaiming it as a new science, especially when no method is given for it. It is what man always has been employed about: he has always been ready to recognize that his proper study is man—himself: and the study of the *real* man is the study of the social man—'sociology,' if we are reduced to such a word for it.

The study of human experience is complicated by the fact of human opinion.

The thing which always has prevented, and always must, I think, prevent, very much definiteness and certainty in this study, is the difficulty of finding a principle on which to assign value, as we study human experience, to human opinion, or what man has thought about himself. I will set down the two

extremes of view in this respect, and it will be seen how wide is the interval between them. We may, on the one side, make our science one of physiology and elementary psychology, investigating the difference in these respects between different nations of men, and the change or development showing itself in course of time in the same race or nation. We may trace in this way what we may conceive to be man's simple or natural feelings; and, without taking account of his opinion at various times about himself, we may make our theory of his happiness, and of what some might call his natural conduct. This is one extreme. On the other hand, we may trace the history of human custom or opinion simply; for man, as I have said, has always, in his own way, studied himself, has had his own opinions about his happiness, always variable and changing. This is the other extreme. It is evident that here we have two entirely distinct sciences: and not only so, but there is space between them, and according to the different ways of considering them, for many sciences more.

Thus some hold that man's opinion about his own happiness has been entirely mistaken; others that the only way in which experience can help us to know what happiness is, is by studying human opinion as embodied in custom

As an illustration of the manner in which the consideration of human opinion complicates our inferences from experience we may take the following question: To what extent has man, in the laws and customs which he has at each time made for himself, been a good judge of his own wants, and his own happiness? This is a question which no positive science of human history or human nature could possibly answer for us: for happiness, as the term is here used, must be an ideal. In fact, it is a question, our own answer to which we are pretty certain to carry with us beforehand into our investigation of man's history, in any view of it. The reforming utilitarians say in general, he has been

and legislation.

an exceedingly bad judge[1]. They are answered that this is at least singular: in making these laws and customs man has not indeed thought of his happiness *alone* (for, more correctly in my view than the utilitarians, he has taken other things into consideration as well), but he *has* thought of his happiness; and considering of what intimate concern it is to him, it is strange if he has so entirely failed in his arrangements for it. So strongly will this be felt by some, that they will very likely consider that our best course, in attempting to find out from past experience what is for man's happiness, will be to study what actual human custom and legislation have been, on the principle that these are the expression of what man at each successive period has *thought* to be his happiness, and that, so far as we go upon experience alone, we can form no other notion of man's happiness except as what he *thinks* his happiness.

Experience itself exhibits man in different stages; how are we to know which gives the truest type?

To return however to our positive science of man: one point of experiential knowledge is the fact that man is in the first instance an organized being or animal. So far as this, he is the subject simply of a higher kind of physiology. Another point of no less importance is, that he is a conscious, judging, self-managing animal, with a disposition to form ideals for the regulation of his conduct. And here comes in the difficulty. By what process of putting together the different manners of his living and the different stages of his civilization are we to say what he is? Is he most what he began with, or what he has ended with? what he was made, or what he has made himself? Is his happiness something fixed, which we may deduce from the physiological and psychological

[1] *Util.* p. 19, &c.

conditions of his being; or is it at each time what, in the various changes of opinion, he *thinks* his happiness?

Nothing is so easy as inconclusivism, or scepticism, or intellectual despair, at the view of the complication and difficulty of human nature; and it is not in the least to encourage this that I speak. There is a unity among men in spite of the infinite individual variety, and there is such a thing as knowledge of man (though the phrase is often misused to express a very partial experience or a very subordinate aptitude); and the three thousand years of the putting forth of man's nature, which constitute our present historical experience, ought to give us further materials for judging what he is than were attainable at an earlier period. He is at least all that he has been, however much more he may be in ideal and in possibility. Still, in the face of the difficulties I have mentioned, there seems to be no use in talking about a science of social man. A multitude of heterogeneous observations massed together (and what we call history is nothing more) will not digest themselves into a science about man, any more than about nature. But we may, and even must, think about these things, and may have something surely of principle and method in our manner of thinking about them. Again, a quantity of particular sciences have formed themselves about man, along a scale involving more and more of his opinion about himself. Physiology or medical science treats of his corporeal well-being; economics of the provisions for this; various forms of political and social science of the manner in which he must organize himself for the purpose of aiding his well-being, corporeal and mental; the theory of legislation treats of the detailed customs and laws which will best conduce

The heterogeneous observations which constitute history do not digest themselves into a science: and the different sciences which have man for their subject matter cannot be combined without a guiding principle.

to this; jurisprudence and historical politics, of the manner in which man has, in practice, judged of what he wanted, legislated for it, and governed himself; the history of literature, philosophy, and science, of the manner in which man has thought, reasoned, and come to know; the history of civilization, of the manner in which he has struggled after, and partially succeeded in, progress or self-improvement. Now these sciences, put together, make a mere chaos unless we have some principles on which to judge of our nature. Though we cannot put them together to make one science of man, we may perhaps so far correlate them as to think and reason with consistency, and find some common ground on which mind can meet with mind.

Though there can be no single science of sociology, still the attempt to correlate these different sciences may be useful as checking the tendency to over-specialization:

While therefore, with respect to the proposed science of sociology, there is no appearance at present of any method for it, or of any such prospective view of it as would warrant our calling it a single science, or giving it a distinctive name, yet the attempt to give it a unity may be of value if it helps to correlate the various sciences above mentioned. There is certainly much truth in M. Comte's remarks on the disadvantage arising from the specialization of the various sciences, and the increasing difficulty of forming, and indisposition to form, large and general views. What he says in this respect mainly in reference to the physical sciences may be considered to have force also in reference to the sciences which concern social man. If in regard to the former the division of intellectual labour, taken by itself and unconnected, is often likely to lead to bad results, it is likely it will lead to worse in regard to the sciences of which I have just spoken, inasmuch as these appeal more to a man's whole mind, and make a demand upon his good sense and his judgment,

in a manner rendering narrowness of view, and partialness of mental cultivation, specially prejudicial.

The great mass of past literature is a record of man, and may be said to consist of an infinite number of observations already made about him, which do digest themselves, more or less, in the intelligent mind into something which may be called a view of human life. We may hope to make this view, as taken by men in general, more reasonable: and all the sciences which have man for their object, such as those which I have above mentioned, may both aid this reasonableness, and be aided by it. But how this kind of knowledge (which must be most intimate to us, and closely connected with everything which we think) is to become a definite and separate science, I do not see.

and, combined with these sciences, the mass of past literature may aid us to form an intelligent view of human life.

Supposing, however, that we have thus got a notion of human life, of what man *is*, the business of morals is, in my view, to endeavour to exalt and ennoble it, that is, to apply to it the kind of improvement of which it is susceptible, and which belongs to it; the notion of improvableness and improvement being, as I have said, given us by the ideal part of our nature, by our tendency not only to observe and learn what *is*, but to think what *might* be and what *should* be. What is improvement, and what otherwise, is then of course the question which arises. It appears to me that we have got some little way towards settling this question, first, in admitting the idea of improvement, that is, in considering that ethics is not simply a positive science of investigation, but that, besides and beyond this, it is the *art* of worthy life; that it makes, and does not merely find: and second, if we disallow the notion that the mere progress or change of the human

When we have thus learnt what man *is*, the business of morality is to teach what he *should be*, to urge him on to improvement.

race, supposing we are able to know what it is, is of itself necessarily improvement.

And this improvement must not be limited to a utilitarian improvement in happiness.

What then is improvement? The utilitarian answers that it is increase in human happiness, and that therefore utilitarianism is the true morality of progress and affords the only real test of progress. But important as is the utilitarian consideration of conduciveness to happiness, it is still not the only one which we must take into account. Man is in a better state (by which I mean a state more ideally to be desired for him), if he is happier, for one thing; but besides this, if he more desires worthy objects and more worthily employs his powers, if he is more faithful, more fair, more mindful of service rendered him, more kind and more loving. If all these things are alike improvement in him, alike desirable for him, why should it be said, as the utilitarian says, that all of them except the first, happiness, are only good or desirable in virtue of their rendering others happier? Because they have really greater goodness and value than happiness (being desirable not only for the sake of the man who has them, but for the sake also of others whose happiness is increased by them), are they therefore to have less credit than happiness, and is their *additional* goodness, their value in producing something valuable beyond themselves, to be counted their only goodness and value?

Civilization does not so much increase, as elevate, happiness.

That man's *happiness* is increased by his civilization and by his living in society, is only one portion, one view, of the reason why it is well that he should do so. That his happiness is increased, we may doubtless say; but it would be more proper to say, that it is elevated in its character; he lives, or may live, in society and civilization, with a fuller, a higher, a better life than could have been his in

a state of barbarism. The feelings of mutual regard and respect, which belong to a state of civilization and of law, are valuable not only as promotive of general pleasure, but also as adding a new dignity to human nature. Man's happiness may be much more truly described as lying in that society with his fellow men of which law and justice and mutual trust are the condition, and in the development of his own nature which is only possible in such society, than in anything which can be called a distinct product of this association. The association is valuable, not as the minister of such and such pleasures, but in itself, for its own sake.

Estimates of relative happiness would be fallacious in comparing different civilizations (e.g. English and Eastern):

I really do not see how, in regard of their great features, different societies can be compared together, with any hope of agreement or conviction, as to the amount of happiness which they produce. Comparing, for example, our English civilization and an Eastern civilization in which for the time there happens to be an orderly and settled government, but in which there is no enterprize, no education, in which women are shut up, and other customs exist altogether alien from our notions; I should feel much more satisfied in considering that, in the absence of the animation and the interest and the calling out of feeling which our state produces, the life lived under such circumstances was but half a life, and must therefore be attended by an inferior happiness, than I should feel able to compare the happinesses by themselves, and pronounce that there was less in the one case than in the other. I feel unable to abstract happiness, in the way that utilitarian comparison requires, from the feeling about it of the person whose happiness we are speaking of. If he finds a Turkish happiness in quiescence and inertia, opium and the sight of dancing girls, I cannot see

who is to gainsay him: nor can I see how Mr Mill's[1] test of comparison, the judgment of intelligent people who have tried different alleged kinds of happiness, is ever to be applied. Under these circumstances I should hesitate to put the case in the utilitarian way, that the Englishman is happier than the Turk, and therefore that his civilization is better as having produced such happiness. I think we might with more confidence say that the Englishman is more of a man than the Turk, lives with a higher human life, lives more in others as well as in himself, and with his own self more brought out, lives therefore with a higher and worthier happiness—with a greater happiness we might doubtless say, but I should hesitate to make much depend on saying so till I understood better how to gauge or measure happiness.

and in settling disputed questions of social morality. Thus slavery is defended against general civilized opinion on utilitarian grounds;

To show the fallaciousness of this notion, that subjecting moral questions to the test of utility properly applied would be not only a correct, but a ready, way of settling them, and produce speedy concurrence in the settlement[2]; we may take any question of the larger morality, or of what can be called human improvement, of interest at the present day, for instance, slavery. It seems to me that the application of the test of utility or happiness is just that which tends to lengthen out the discussion most, and give least prospect of an end to it. Setting aside the question whether utility is the correct principle, and only asking whether it is a ready and convincing one, it is certainly at this moment the principle upon which slavery would be defended; while yet I suppose we may say that the opinion of civilized man has come to the conclusion, nearly

[1] See above, p. 47 *seq.*

[2] See above, p. 245 *seq.*; and compare *Util.* pp. 81—87.

universal, that slavery is wrong, and that the non-existence of it would be a step of human improvement. Utilitarianism seems just what, in the way of argument, hinders the settlement of a question which man's moral feeling would otherwise have settled. It is said that the slaves are happier as they are than they would be if free; and the putting the question upon this issue makes it more difficult to decide, and gives more scope for persistence of opinion in the opposite direction, than almost any other. Of course the supposition made by Mr Mill, that all men are to be treated equally, would settle the question: this, as I have said[1] before, is not utilitarianism, but an adoption of a foreign principle for the purpose of making utilitarianism tolerable: that it is not utilitarianism is evident from its inconsistency with the really utilitarian argument above. Genuine utilitarianism only makes the question hopelessly discussible; there must be a reference to something besides utilitarianism (even within professed utilitarianism itself) to give hope of settling it.

Improvements of man's moral view seem always to have arisen, and probably must arise, from the mixture of an idealism, often rather confused, with positivism or the view of fact. This latter offers moral difficulties over which the former more or less triumphs. For example, the difficulty offered to morals, in the view of fact, by the existence of mankind in so many different states of development, or in something not unlike distinct species, relatively superior and inferior, is very great. I have mentioned how, in the case of slavery, utilitarianism seems to offer no means of settling the question of right and wrong, and no help towards (what I should

as also on merely positivist grounds, the value for human nature, as such, being idealistic.

[1] See above, p. 88, *seq.*

call) improvement of human view in the matter: and just as slavery is very likely to fortify itself on grounds of utilitarianism, so it is very likely to do so on grounds of science or positivism. If it be once considered that a moral conclusion can be drawn from the fact of the negroes being, or not being, generically of the same race as white men, slavery is really strengthened by putting the question on this basis; as it will always be possible to make much of the particulars, as to matter of fact, in which the two descriptions of men differ. The real force of the feeling against slavery lies in the idea, to whatever extent it takes possession of people's minds, that, even in the lowest races of men, mind and reason are developed to such an extent as to take them out of the category of the brute animals, whom man appropriates to his use, and who live, so far as he can master them, for his benefit; that beings in whom consciousness, will, and reason exist, as they do in anything bearing the shape of man, have a right to be considered really men, and to live for their own benefit, not, compulsorily, for the benefit of others. I consider the force of this feeling to lie rather in the idealism than in the amount of positive knowledge which it involves, for this reason: what has increased it has been, not so much our coming more and more to the knowledge, as I suppose we have done, that man does not (as *a priori* we might have supposed) shade off into the brutes in such a manner as to leave it doubtful with regard to certain races whether they should be classed with the former or with the latter; but rather the stronger development in ourselves of value for our human nature—a development which is quite independent of any positive knowledge about the extent of the genus man. Christianity and civili-

zation both tend strongly to increase this, and in this way to nourish the feeling opposed to slavery.

It seems to me that the civilized feeling of man tends thus more and more to the adoption, into the full rights of manhood, even of the most backward and least endowed specimens of the human race. It may be interesting for a moment to compare this tendency with the course of human feeling in respect to the brute animals. Mr Mill, in the passage where he says that the happiness which is in the last instance to determine our action is 'that of the whole sentient creation[1],' evidently speaks with full significance. There is no doubt that we ought to be described as in society with the brute animals; that, since they have wants and are susceptible of pleasures, and we have sufficient knowledge of them to be able to feel sympathy with them and pity for them, we have duties towards them, and they, if we like so to express ourselves, rights as against us. The history of human feeling in regard to them is a curious subject of investigation: it is interesting in regard of the relation between the ideal and the positive in morals; and it is most eminently practical, inasmuch as the difference of view in this respect is one great cause of estrangement between one portion and another of the human race. Without concluding that the course which things have taken is, necessarily and as such, the right one, it is to be observed that, as a matter of fact, civilization, while it has tended within certain limits to bring out the idea of consideration for the inferior animals, has not at all tended to confirm and ratify that exceeding development of the idea which we find in some portions of the human race. And, looking at them abstractly, on what moral principle or theory are we to settle

So utilitarianism and positivism alike fail to furnish us with satisfactory guidance as to our treatment of the inferior animals.

[1] *Util.* p. 17.

the question between a Hindoo and an European as to the universal sacredness of life? I do not see that utilitarianism gives us any help: I do not, in fact, see any single principle on which such a question can be decided. It seems to me to be settled on no other principle than this (if it is to be called one), that the improvement and elevation of human life which, speaking generally, we understand by the name of civilization, cannot take place without such an use of the inferior animal creation by man as in many cases to involve their destruction. Man, it may be said to begin with, is positively and physiologically a carnivorous animal; but this would not in my view settle the question, if there were any reason to suppose that he would be a higher animal if he were not carnivorous, or that his ceasing to be so would be any improvement as to the better part of his nature. It does not appear however that such human improvement as we have seen has been associated with any tendency in this direction.

Here too idealistic considerations must enter in; considerations of duty, which binds man specially to his own kind, of improvability, which is his distinctive attribute.

The above illustration will show that, in speaking of man as distinguished from the inferior animals, we have to bring in another consideration besides that of happiness, the consideration, namely, of improvement; which is in fact that of reason working as it should. Otherwise, if we put our action upon the ground of happiness alone, we seem to find no reason why the happiness of man should be preferred to that of the animals. Of course the utterly vague utilitarian notion of *quantity* of happiness may be so explained as to settle this question: but in general, something of a dread lest in this manner our regard for the happiness of man should be diminished, or made less distinctively clear, has caused a jealousy of the regard shown, by Bentham for instance, to the happiness, and what he considered the rights,

of animals[1]. Happiness, as I have said throughout, is but *one* thing to be considered in the matter. Each species of animal has a *physical* sympathy with its own kind: this exists in reasonable man as a reasonable sympathy, or real mutual intelligence and regard, and in social and improved man it exists in a higher form still, as mutual and understood *duty*. We value man above the animals on account of our greater mutual intelligence with him arising from our common nature, and on account of our special duty towards him, in the same way as within the human race we have a special duty to our own family. But as reasonable beings with wide and general view, we should be above the merely generic sympathy which in the animals confines the interest of each to its own congeners. Only that here comes in the further and ultimate consideration on the subject, that, namely, of the improvability of man, and the consequent importance of his possible destinies. If there were any prospect that we could by training really elevate the nature of one of the inferior races of animals, and bring it to reasonableness and morality like that of man—if any of them were improvable like him—the case would then be different between such a race and man. But the gap between the other animals and man remains as it was: and with all the training which we can give to specialties in the understanding (for so it is) of some races of the brutes, we evidently can make no improvement in their nature as we understand improvement of man's nature. This is the real distinction between what we call rational and irrational creatures.

Difficulties in the way of human

The relation of human improvement to the different races of men, and the difficulty introduced into

[1] See Whewell, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, p. 236, ed. 1862.

improvement arising from differences of race, as to capacity of civilization;

moral considerations by this difference, are matters which press themselves ever more and more forward with the advance of human experience. By this time, if ever, we ought to know certain positive facts as to this difference of races; but it seems doubtful what we do know. We ought, for instance, to know whether some races are strong and persistent, so as to spread and prevail over others (as might be supposed of the European and Negro races), others weak and impersistent, so as to yield to others and die out (as might be supposed of the American Indian and Australian races); what relation capability of civilization, so far as we can judge of it, has to such strength and persistency; whether there are different sorts of civilization, or whether there is but one which offers prospect of *continual* improvement. About such questions as these, and many like them, it seems to me we *might* know something positive; but I rather doubt whether we do.

as to the association of the more and less civilized races.

The earth, we may say, is now *one place* in the imagination or mind of the civilized races upon it; they live, in their own particular part, as citizens of the whole of it, acquainted now (very nearly) with each separate portion, and enjoying the productions of the whole of it by means of commerce. But the earth is far from being one 'civitas' or society of men *in fact*, and even, apparently, from tending to become so; and this, not so much resulting from physical fact relating to the earth, such as for instance climate, as from fact connected with mankind itself, namely, the unassociativeness of different races of man; or in other words, from the fact that that union and blending of different races of man, which hitherto and within limits has been a main agent of human improvement, seems no longer so, now that the field is widened and races *more* widely

different have to come together. The road of increasing association and stronger brotherly feeling between the different portions of the human race seems to break off from the road of general human improvement. No one I think can consider the prospect of the future of the human race in this respect satisfactory. Are the races of highest civilization doomed only to exterminate, with wretched accompaniments of vice and degradation, the weak uncivilized races like the North American and the Australian; to rule over and oppress the weak civilized races like the Hindoos and Chinese, without entering into real association with them; and to live in an association which is worse than none, in the relation of master and slave, with the strong uncivilized races like the Negro? With this prospect is there anything for these higher civilized races themselves but what I may call a choice of *manner* of degeneracy? either the physical degeneracy (whatever it is) which may result from amalgamation, or the moral degeneration which must arise from an unnatural, and (in the truest sense of the word) an *inhuman* character of association?

Difficulties arising from the various employments of men: the existence of poverty in civilized communities.

Besides the difficulty arising to the consideration of human improvement from the existence of various races of men, there arises another from the variety of employments, and from the apparent necessity of great economical pressure in parts of the society, before men will be found ready to undertake some of these. If we speak of man in general, it is probable, as I have said, that the physical or economical conditions of his being are, at any rate, not harder than those of other animals. For the purpose of such comparison we must of course suppose him to a certain degree organized in society and civilized; otherwise if we look at him as not thus

organized, he appears worse off, physically and economically, than other animals; which is perhaps the case with such races as the blacks in Australia. But though civilized man, as a race and on the whole, cannot be said to live under hard economical conditions of existence, yet civilization has always hitherto left portions of the civilized communities under these conditions. The existence of poverty in rich communities is an unhappy spectacle, from which time does not seem to free us: and it is one which preeminently calls, in the contemplation of it, whether by rich or by poor, by the philosopher or by the man of action, for that sort of good sense and absence of partiality of view, the encouragement of which seems to me the best service which moral philosophy can render to mankind. The constitution of human society is an easy thing to make paradoxes about, or to despair about, or to rail about; but it is not an easy thing to think sensibly about, putting together the various considerations which ought, for a proper view, to be brought together. Since it is what man in the course of his movement has come to, as the result of a great deal of effort after self-improvement, it must, we may perhaps conclude, have much in it that is necessary, and much that is good: but since man has an idea of something further which he would wish to be, and has very great powers of making himself such, we may with still more certainty conclude that there is much in it which is changeable for the better or improvable. And we may at least try to come to something like clearness of thought as to these respective portions of the constitution of society.

Utilitarianism, aiming at the immediate relief

Utilitarianism derives some of its strength, often indeed tacitly (by which I mean not necessarily as it is expounded by philosophers, but as it presents

itself to people's minds), from the view of the evident urgency of human want, of whatever kind this want may be. Can we act for anything else than human happiness, it is asked, when even those portions of happiness, the value of which is allowed by all, are so deficient, so little enjoyed by many? All must respect and sympathize with this feeling, but the indulgence of it belongs to that partiality of view which, I have said, we ought not to yield to. A feeling of this kind prevailing too strongly at any stage of human improvement, would very greatly check the course of that improvement. Those wants of human nature which force themselves at once on our view, and which we can at once do something to relieve, would then absorb our thoughts, to the prejudice of such as were less immediately prominent, and were less susceptible of immediate relief; though these latter might be full as important, and as really, in the end, remediable. Besides the immediate and palpable wants of man, there is what may be described as a vast mass of want in respect of man's mind, imagination, and feelings, and there is also the great want of moral elevation and improvement. These wants are all the more real for the ideal element they involve; for their being rather want in the sense of *absence* of what should be, than want in the sense of *desiredness*. Man, in the course which he has gone through, has in fact acted very much in the direction of these wants as well as of those which are more palpable. But he has done this in the main by the exercise of those parts of his nature which are independent of the desire of happiness. Human nature in general has increased its happiness, in the same way as we shall each one of us best increase ours, by not thinking too much about it, by not being too utilitarian.

of the most pressing wants, is in danger of forgetting wants less pressing but more important, and so of checking the true progress of humanity.

CHAPTER XX.

ON THE CLAIM OF UTILITARIANISM TO BE THE MORALITY OF PROGRESS.

[We have now seen three ways in which utilitarianism puts itself forward as the Morality of Progress; first of all, on the ground of its method, as being based on the modern inductive philosophy; secondly, as giving their true meaning to the words 'progress,' 'improvement,' 'civilization,' and supplying to these both a guiding principle and a standard by which they may be tested; thirdly, as the representative of positivism in respect of its getting rid of theological and mystical ideas, and making man his own sole object. The two former claims have been treated of in previous chapters; in this chapter the author, after speaking shortly of the third claim, proceeds to examine a fourth claim, which may be considered to be especially put forward by Mr Mill in favour of his own neo-utilitarianism, on the ground of its connexion with the idea of equality.[1]]

Human nature is supposed by some philosophers to have learnt that it must be itself its

The tendency of a portion of philosophy, at present, is to make human happiness distinct before us, as the one and only worthy purpose of human action: or perhaps, endeavouring to associate with itself the religious sentiment, to make humanity or human nature the object of our worship. No doubt history

[1] This paragraph is added by the editor.

and experience have given to human nature, in this age of the world, a distinct notion of itself as existing on earth, and of the earth on which it exists, which was not possessed at earlier periods. We may figure this to ourselves under the form of a developed self-consciousness on the part of human nature, analogous to the fuller and freer self-consciousness which shows itself in the grown man, as he becomes more and more aware of his own work and position, and of the relation between himself and things around him. But if it is a fact, in relation to individual men, that as they grow in years, and become wider of view, and freer, as to thought, from the ties and the limits with which ignorance surrounds them, they become more and more their own object, and live more and more only for themselves, it is at any rate a fact sad to acquiesce in, and which we need not consider bound upon us by any duty; and if again anything analogous to this takes place in regard of the human race in general, I should only say, so much the worse. To swim with the stream may be easy, but there is nothing to show that it is our duty to do so, and supposing our duty to lie in the opposite direction, our task is only made the harder. Is it the fact then that such is the natural course of development in the general feeling of mankind? Let us see.

own object of action and even of worship.

In respect to everything of this kind there is a self-willedness, so to call it, in the natural sentiment of men, very difficult to follow, but which it is foolish not to take notice of. I think however that it may be safely affirmed that the morality which *talks* most about consulting the happiness of others, is not that which as a fact human nature has felt that it wanted most. Even the *acting* on principle with constant effort for the happiness of others, is not a kind of

But this is not borne out by the common feeling of men: they are not satisfied with the philosophy which bids them aim exclusively at their own hap-

piness, nor even with the philanthropy which tends to produce it.

benevolence which, when we get past the simple benevolence of meat, drink, and raiment, men are very ready to appreciate. The consulting the happiness of others is not kindness itself, but is a result of it: love or kindness has in the first instance no other reference to happiness, than as happiness belongs to the actual feeling of love and the thought of what is loved. It is only as associated with real warmth of feeling and with self-denial that professed philanthropy has ever made that character which men have at all times revered, and been almost disposed to worship.

They wish others to be what they can themselves love; they wish to give happiness as well as to receive it.

The natural feeling of mankind on this point is much the same as in the case of affection: people take pleasure in those whom they love thinking of them and consulting their happiness, but they are often more pleased when the pleasing of them is spontaneous, without effort or intention to please them: we want not only that others should love us, but that they should be what we ourselves like and love: we want to love as well as to be loved, to give pleasure as well as to receive it. And so human nature, it appears to me, as a matter of fact wants to have its good men not entirely occupied with the thought of pleasing it and making it happy: it wants to look up to them and to love them for other reasons than the benefit received from them: it will be more pleased, in some respects, when their pleasing it is a result of their being what they are than a result of their effort to do it good.

We come round in this respect to what I have said before, namely that though, if we are to give a meaning to the term happiness, we may mean by it all that man wants, yet if we suppose the word happiness to have an independent meaning of its own, it is merely misleading to say that all that man

wants is happiness. He wants much besides. The old way of expression is, that the two moving principles of human nature are the love of pleasure and the love of action: anyhow there is something besides the love of pleasure or of anything that can be understood as happiness. Utilitarians say that the love of action is not for the sake of the action itself, but for the sake of the happiness towards which it is directed. But in the same manner it might be said that the love of pleasure, in an active nature like that of man, is not of the pleasure alone, but of gaining the pleasure, of success in the attainment of the object. The best form in which the utilitarian theory can probably be put, is to say that man's moving principles are, first, the love of his own pleasure, and then the love of that of others; the former being the animal or merely natural principle, the other, the moral and elevated one; but this does not state the whole fact as it is. For man's moral love of the pleasure of others has associated with it, more or less, the love of being himself the author of that pleasure: his moral happiness is in consulting, in giving pleasure to others, as his simply natural happiness is in being consulted, in himself enjoying.

Human nature half embraces, half despises its own utilitarianism.

Happiness is a very self-willed thing. If the utilitarian will tell man what he really wants, will interpret man's happiness to himself, he will do him indeed a service. Here again we come round to what I have said before, that we can only explain human happiness to the extent that we understand human nature. In this respect, so far as the study is serious and real, it is the same thing whether we study human nature, which is our real subject, under the name and form of investigating what is man's happiness, or in some other name and form, as of

analysing man's emotional or moral nature. But this nature of ours, however we study it, seems either to look to much besides happiness, or if we prefer so to express it, to find happiness in the strangest and most various ways. Human nature is to a certain degree utilitarian itself, but it is a very bad disciple of utilitarian philosophy. It half embraces, half despises, its own utilitarianism: it looks to philosophy as to what it hopes may raise it above that: philosophical utilitarianism disappoints it: it takes strange pleasure in what makes no profession of adding to its happiness. As the people of Athens (and in fact people in general are not indisposed to do the same) would often most perversely listen rather to the statesmen who disdained to humour it, than to the demagogues who most loudly professed to make its pleasure their sole object; so it is with human nature and the philosophies which do not, and which do, set before it as its only object itself and its own pleasure.

Positivist utilitarianism says that man has outgrown his imaginations whether theological or metaphysical, and must now confine his thoughts and feelings to the narrow sphere of self.

This latter kind of philosophy, in various forms of language, says in effect, During its childhood and youth human nature, imperfectly acquainted with the nature of things about it, and consequently but imperfectly conscious of itself, owing to want of ground on which to project such consciousness, has filled up the gap with all sorts of dreams, imaginations, and chimeras, of better moral natures than its own which it might possibly be able to make itself attain to, of other forms of moral being besides itself, and other conceivable spheres of existence. As it has grown on in experience and knowledge, all this has become fainter to its view, which is now confined to the knowledge of itself and its own physical and actual circumstances of existence; to employ its action and its powers of thought, there is left this alone.

Human nature has outgrown the more phenomenal or pictorial portions of its imagination, as of ideal religious beings, and also its more refined and abstract imaginations of an ideal good, rightness, or mental nobleness: there is now left nothing for it but itself (and itself, not as it thinks it might or ought to be, but as it finds it is), to live for, serve, and worship.

It is not really the case that man has got rid of these imaginations; and what ground can this philosophy allege, when it tells him he *ought* to get rid of them?

I do not understand exactly what the philosophy, which speaks in the above manner, means by 'human nature having *outgrown* all this.' There is here that confusion between the fact and the ideal into which the philosophies which appeal to human experience seem so apt to fall. As a simple fact, human nature seems very far from having outgrown all this: while if we say that it *ought* to have done so, some reason has to be given why (if we admit the idea of anything as what it ought to have done) *this* is what it ought to have done rather than anything else. The reason which will probably be given is, that this is what it *has* done. Such is the logic of this kind of philosophy.

As a fact human nature does always crave an object above itself and finds it in religion and morality.

Human nature has certainly always had a great disposition to believe that there is something which it ought to do, and that in doing this it will make itself happy. If we speak of the work of the whole human race, that work, it is felt, must be something more than a collective prudence, and must have for its object something more than human pleasure. Religion meets this moral demand of man's nature for an object beyond itself, by setting before us the glory of God as the object of all human action. And independently of this, so far as we can abstract morality from religion, human improvement is an object which, though not going beyond man, yet going beyond his present self to an ideal conception of what he might

and should be, gives him something to look to, some purpose to live for. In religion and morality human nature makes an effort to rise above itself.

I now proceed to examine the special claim put forward by Mr Mill in favour of his own neo-utilitarianism. As we have seen him identify this with the morality of public spirit and unselfishness, and claim for it specially or exclusively, all the admiration which in this respect has been usually given to the morality of Stoicism or Christianity, so he identifies it also with what we may call the morality of progress. I will explain what I mean.

Mr Mill identifies utilitarianism with the morality of progress, connecting the two by the common idea of equality. He holds that the progress of society consists in its tendency to a state of equality, and that such a state would lead to an expanded sociality.

Mr Mill has described as 'the binding force of the utilitarian morality[1]' a thing which the older utilitarians took small count of, namely, the 'powerful natural sentiment' of sociality[2]. This has been recognized by moralists from the earliest days of ethics, but always recognized the most by those whose opinions have been least Epicurean and utilitarian. In this description, however, there are some particulars which give to it, not an utilitarian character (for the whole idea is alien from genuine utilitarianism), but a character bringing it into some sort of relation with the utilitarianism which Mr Mill is here defending. One such particular is the extent to which he holds the idea that *society* really involves the *equality* of the members of it; and that the advance or improvement of society is its tendency towards 'a state in which it will be impossible to live permanently on other terms' (than those of equality and of equal consulting the interests of all) 'with anybody[3].' The manner therefore in his view in which 'political improvement' goes on, is by 'removing the sources

[1] *Util.* p. 48. [2] *Ibid.* p. 45. [3] *Ibid.* p. 46.

of opposition of interest, and levelling inequalities of legal privilege between individuals or classes.' Corresponding with this political improvement there is what we may call the social improvement arising from the habit of people cooperating together, and proposing to themselves a social, not an individual interest, as the aim of their actions, and from other causes. In a state of growing civilization and of political and social improvement of this character, 'influences are constantly on the increase, which tend to generate in each individual a feeling of unity with all the rest[1].' Such a sentiment is felt continually to be more and more natural. Of course the increase of this sentiment is a great improvement in morals also. And all arises from a principle which, Mr Mill says, is 'the binding force of the utilitarian morality.'

It was the association of the reforming utilitarianism with the idea of equality which served to make the former unpopular.

We have heard this at various times before, and it was the association some time since of that portion of utilitarianism in which Mr Mill is interested, with ideas of this sort as to social and political improvement, which did more probably than anything properly philosophical in it to bring upon it the hard language it has had to undergo, and which it might have avoided if it had always been associated with the conservatism of Paley. For myself, I have far more sympathy with the earnestness and aspiration after better things which breathe through Mr Mill's language, than I have with any spirit of satisfaction (if it is to be called so) with what exists, under the idea that we are not likely to get anything better. But from Mr Mill's social views I entirely differ.

But (1) equality is not a part of utilitarianism as such;

First of all, the whole of this, right or wrong, has nothing to do with utilitarianism, that is, with the doctrine that it is the conduciveness of actions

[1] *Ibid.* p. 47.

(2) levelling is not a further step of progress; (3) variety is essential to society.

to happiness which determines their moral value: so that this morality of progress may be right, and yet utilitarianism wrong; and its rightness, if it is right, brings no credit to utilitarianism. Secondly, we must make a distinction, as to civilization and social progress, between those early steps which change man from a barbarian into a social being, and those later steps which only vary his civilization or social state from one form of it to another, from a better to a worse, or from a worse to a better. It is an entire mistake to regard the process of levelling, disclassifying, making everybody like everybody else, which goes on often in an advanced state of society, notably in our own, as a farther progress or portion of that same process which formed men into societies, and really made them civilized or social. Thirdly, as I have remarked before[1], society requires *differences* of individuals as much as, or more than, equality or resemblance, or else it is mere gregariousness, and no organization. And human society especially is a society of *unlikeness:* I do not say *inequality* because the idea of equality implies quantitative measurement, or comparison by one standard, and nothing of this sort is possible in regard of men, the kinds and varieties of difference among them being infinite; so that when the word *equal* is used in regard of them, it is used generally with very little meaning.

The existence of class interests is good or bad according to circumstances. Progress in civilization may consist in

It is a very narrow view of the improvement of society to suppose, as Mr Mill does, that so essential a part of it is the destruction of *privilege*. The difference among men which is marked by this word 'privilege' (the organization that is, of the society into ranks and classes, more or less traditional and hereditary), stands substantially under the same cir-

[1] See above, p. 95 *seq.*

cumstances as the institution of hereditary or family property. The difference is right or wrong, just or unjust, according to the nature of it: it is better existing, or better absent, according to the circumstances of the state: as it is the nurse of some virtues, so it is injurious to others. According to period and place, it is in the growth and distinctification of classes and interests, or it is in the breaking down of the barriers between them, that progress in civilization consists. All this belongs to political science, not to moral.

establishing or in removing them.

Little as the experience of the world and of the past may be able to teach us, it may at any rate teach us that such advance of civilization as consists in breaking down privilege and class interests, and making men in *this* manner equal, has no tendency to produce in them that feeling of unity with others, which, as we should all agree with Mr Mill, would be so great an improvement in morality. Whole nations have been subjected to this process of pulverizing, and though generally there has been one gigantic inequality, that between themselves and a despot who rules them, in other respects there has been nothing of external rank or privilege to hinder their calling each other brethren. But what I think has generally been considered in relation to such states of society is that, in the increase of individual selfishness, there is lost to morals as much, or probably more, than is gained by the ceasing of class selfishness. And when Mr Mill considers that opposition of interests, with all its temptation to wrong, is removed by the levelling and disclassifying of men, surely it must strike him that there is at any rate nothing in this to lessen the opposition of *individual* interests. At present the existence of men in families, orders, separate governments, and other such divisions, with

If they foster corporate selfishness, they at any rate tend to restrain individual selfishness.

the various feelings arising therefrom, such as those of family partialities, of *esprit de corps*, of patriotism, are main agents in breaking down selfishness; or if the feeling which they generate is still a species of selfishness and not proper philanthropy, it is at any rate a selfishness of a much better and nobler kind than simple individualism or egotism.

Mr Mill inconsistently looks to organization in the future to destroy selfishness, while he considers its effect in the past has been to increase it.

It seems hardly clear, with respect to the happier state which Mr Mill anticipates, how far it is to be a state in which there is no difference at all of class, or corporate, interest, or how far one in which such corporate difference is only to stand upon a better basis than at present. He speaks of men cooperating together in different bodies for different purposes, which will of course make new classes and divisions replacing the old: in fact, cooperation or sympathy of this kind is one of the things which is to produce the better state. Thus at one moment he seems to anticipate the improvement from the breaking down of the special sympathies which at present hinder us from calling all men brethren; at another moment from the making fresh and stronger sympathies of this very kind. But if the present corporate organizations among men do more harm by creating class partialities than they do good by creating special sympathies, I do not see why the same should not be the case with the new cooperative organizations which Mr Mill anticipates. And if these latter are to work as such powerful opponents to selfishness, I see no reason why the former may not do so likewise.

Property is natural to man.

Whatever may be the errors and mistakes into which human societies may have fallen about property, in the way of unduly magnifying the differences among men, it seems to me certain that man, when we look upon him as a moral being, is to be

taken with property or belongings, giving him on the one hand power of action, and on the other limiting action. The genitive case and possessive pronoun are as early in thought as the nominative case and the personal pronoun. From the very first men have something which is their own. They have their capacity, and they have their limitation.

It represents the difference between men, and has to be both protected and regulated by law; individuality being no less important than similarity to the welfare of society.

The varied surface of human society is formed by the intermingled action of *might* and *right*, of man's power and man's moral feeling, something in the manner in which that of the physical earth is formed by fire and water. The former is always to a certain degree at work, and on certain occasions bursts forth irresistibly; the latter acts habitually to restrain this within certain limits and channels, and in the case of the outbreaks, to set things to rights as speedily as may be, and to smooth the new rough surface into regularity and order. Property is the representative either of ancient irregular force, protected now against fresh force which would disturb it, or else of force regular and as law limits and allows it. Property is thus the representative and expansion of difference among men; and society, in order to the development of the fuller life of men, has at once to bring out and to regulate their difference. We are the more men, the more we have of our own, associated with our individuality, differencing us from others, giving us, so to speak, moral resource or moral capital to set in action the power which we have. At the same time we are the more men, in another point of view, the more we have of reason and knowledge and sympathetic feeling, enabling us to join our minds with others, and live a common life with them. We identify property of course in our language very much with material possessions and goods, and in the same manner we identify *living*

very much with enjoyments connected with these. This is very well for law, but in respect of morals it should be considered that we each have our particular possessions and life, things which we value, a manner of action which belongs to us. It is the purpose of society, not more to bring us into relations with others, than to preserve our individuality against the overbearing and oppression of others.

The principle of equal distribution was suggested to utilitarians by the natural feeling for equality before the law; but even in law it is not universally applicable.

It will be seen that what Mr Mill really identifies with the morality of social progress, is not at all utilitarianism, but is that idea of an arithmetical equality among men which has been incorporated into some forms of utilitarianism in order to regulate the distribution of action for happiness. To a certain extent this view has been recognized in all times of ethical philosophy: in some respects all people are to be treated alike by us, *as men*. But it has been no less generally recognized that in some respects they are to be treated differently, *as this or that man* bearing a particular relation to us. It was mainly in view of this distinction that justice was in early times divided into two portions, corrective and distributive. The utilitarianism with which Mr Mill sympathizes arose contemporaneously with a strong feeling, especially in France, against 'privilege,' and in favour of what is called 'equality before the law.' This feeling, that judgment is one of those things in which there should be no respect of persons, is a strong and worthy feeling of human nature; but the error of utilitarianism lay in this, that, incapable of seeing more than one thing at a time, it forgot that respect of persons is as right in some cases as it is wrong in others. Incorporating with itself the equality of men as a principle of morals, it neglected all idea of special ties and sympathies for that of an arithmetic aggregation, and certainly in this way allowed it to

be supposed that our duty to each, including ourselves, was to be measured out by a real calculation. Accordingly we have seen how Mr Mill considers the advance of sociality to consist in the reducing of society more and more to such a form as shall induce us to look upon all alike, so that our measurement of the equal amounts of action for happiness due to each shall have nothing to interfere with and disturb it. This seems to me, as I have already indicated, not a continuation and perfection, but a reversal of the process by which society was founded in the place of barbarism. Even Mr Mill seems partly to consider this, and to look forward to the units rearranging themselves, as we have seen, in other and better forms. The equality of the arithmetical utilitarianism is not society, and can furnish only a partial, and therefore wrong, basis for morals.

From what I have said I trust it may appear, first, that Mr Mill's view of social progress, supposing it were correct, has no philosophical connexion with utilitarianism, or the morality whose special attention is directed to happiness, being only concerned with an accident of it, namely, the idea of the equality of men: and next, that since Mr Mill's view of social progress is neither good nor correct, it would bring no strength to utilitarianism, even supposing that it was connected with utilitarianism itself, and not with a mere accident of it.

It appears then that equality is neither a part of progress nor of utilitarianism.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHAT ARE THE REQUISITES OF A MORAL PHILOSOPHY AT THE PRESENT TIME?

Moral philosophy ought now (1) to recognize the variety of human nature, (2) to aid religion, (3) to uphold the interest in the ideal.

To come to an end at last, I will just mention three characters which seem to belong to a moral philosophy such as is needed at this particular time; the first, that it should fully recognize the largeness and variety of human nature, and should not merely aim at a ready and easy solution of the problem before it, without full conviction that such solution is sufficient; the second, that it should recognize the fact that the most important practical teaching is in the hands of religion, and that its work must be to aid *that:* the third, that it should feel its own especial task to be the keeping up in the human mind of what we may call the philosophical feeling, the interest in the ideal, or in what *should be.*

Reasons why it has so little weight at the present time. It is either vague or onesided.

There is no study more universal than moral philosophy: everybody has his opinions about human nature and character. And yet, as a science, it cannot be said to have a very high reputation at present in our own country: nobody expects to learn much from what professes to be moral philosophy, or seems to think much can come of it. I think it is a thing to be regretted that we should be such theorists and critics in regard of morals as we almost all of us are, without

taking more pains than we do to be good ones: and by moral philosophy I should wish to understand whatever would help us to be such. I believe also that the carelessness which there is about moral philosophy arises from a sort of notion, well grounded or not, that it is very likely to be mere words, or else a sort of quackery: very likely not to take hold of human nature, but to rest in a region of useless generalities; or else very likely to seize hold of some one point, possibly of some importance and truth, to exaggerate this, and make everything depend upon it, recommending attention to it as what will at once set everything right, in a manner which those who see the variety and complication of actual life are at once aware is not reasonable. It is not likely *a priori* that one medicine or one manner of treatment will cure all diseases; and in the same way it seems to me that any simplicity in morals which is, not painfully and in time distilled from most complicated observation (like the grand simplicity of the Newtonian discoveries), but summarily assumed as what must be true and what must account for the facts (as has been the case in the larger number of moral theories), is not at all likely to be what we want.

Some dislike it as interfering with the free growth of character; others object to it as unpractical.

Another reason why moral philosophy has probably been always more or less undervalued among men is, that those who would naturally be most interested in it, from their interest in the consideration of human character, are jealous of it on account of its supposed tendency to level, regulate, and square that character, destroying its nativeness and variety; while those who are disposed to levelling and regulation are not in general interested in human character or philosophy of any kind, but prefer something more practical. Moral philosophy thus

looks dull and stupid to any one interested in man himself and his character, and visionary and unpractical to any one interested in man's outward life and his daily business. The undervaluing of moral philosophy from this point of view falls in readily with the undervaluing it on account of the supposed partiality or onesidedness of the successive theories of moral philosophers. The former of the two sets of people whom I just mentioned, who are those to whom philosophers should most look, consider, we may say, that human nature is too large for the moral philosopher—he cannot grasp the whole of it. And he is worse than the poet, who is similarly unable to do so; for the poet makes no pretence at system, but is content to exhibit his views as partial, while the latter must pretend to systematize what he cannot grasp.

Its present aim should be largeness of view rather than system. It is really rather a group of sciences than a single science.

Reflection upon this may lead us to think that what is most wanted, at the present stage of moral philosophy, is not definiteness of system, but largeness of view. Of course this renunciation of system, so far as it goes, lowers moral philosophy from its scientific rank, alters it from the character of a single science to that of a group of sciences, whose relation to each other it is not altogether easy to determine. But, as I have before said[1], while nominally a single science, it has always in fact been a combination of this kind. And one mischief arising from the claim put forward by each of these sciences in succession, to be the whole of moral philosophy, is that they have had to carry on a warfare with each other in many respects unreasonable and illogical. Each of them has attacked the others with arguments only good from its own point of view, the propriety of which is really the question in dispute, and has perhaps put

[1] See above, p. 122 *seq.* 275 *seq.*

itself forward, puffed itself (one might almost call it) on some extraneous ground, as that it is the way in which all disputes will at once be settled (which we have seen was Bentham's great recommendation of his principle), or that it is the only inductive method, or whatever the ground may be.

Hedonics is only one science of the group: it cannot constitute the whole.

In reality *hedonics* or *hedonology*, the science of human pleasure, well founded on observation and methodized into general laws, is a very reasonable science for Epicurus or Bentham to form the notion of, and to construct if they can. In the course of this construction they will I presume meet with difficulties, some of which I have discussed in this Essay with reference to Mr Mill;—for instance, whether we are to assume a difference of quality in pleasure, and if so, how pleasures of different qualities are to be compared for preferableness; Mr Mill thinks it is to be done by the experience of persons who have tried both;—but supposing the science constructed, still the question remains, Is this moral philosophy, and is it the whole of moral philosophy? The science is in fact one of those which I have described as subsidiary to moral philosophy, and one which may possibly be of great importance to it; but the question of moral philosophy is, Is this consideration of pleasure the single one by which man does, and should, direct his action? Is his moral *differentia* that he is a pleasure-seeking being? Is the ideal which his imagination wakes in him one of pleasure only? What is the nature of the *imperative* character attaching itself apparently to this pursuit of pleasure, by which it is in some sense *required* that we act for pleasure, when it is the pleasure of others? The hedonic science itself can give no sort of answer to these questions, and is the same in itself, whatever answer is given to them: it is these

questions, and others like them, which constitute moral philosophy.

Utilitarianism compared to the early Ionic philosophies: the crude conception of happiness is as little fit to be taken as the universal principle of the moral world, as fire or water of the physical world.

I must confess that so far is utilitarianism in my eyes from bearing in it the character which one might suppose should belong to the latest birth of time, it puts me rather in mind of the days when philosophers contended that the universe was composed of fire, or water, or whatever it might be. The taking the single characteristic of conduciveness to happiness, as what should determine our choice of actions in all the complications and each conjuncture of life, seems to me to belong rather to the pre-observational simplicity of the philosophers whom I have just referred to, than to the post-observational simplicity of Copernicus and Newton. As the question lay to those philosophers, What is fire? or What is water? the fact being that fire and water were composite portions or functions of that nature which it was attempted to explain by them; so the question lies to our utilitarians, What is happiness? the fact being here also that happiness is something intertwined with the other circumstances of action, in such a way that the resolving all action into effort after it is no more true than the resolving the whole universe into fire or water. When it is said that all that contempt of happiness, and intentional sacrifice of happiness, and effort after something quite distinct from happiness, which we constantly see in good human action, is all really effort after happiness, this seems to me just like saying that air or anything gaseous is all water evaporated, that all solid bodies are water congealed, and so forth: what do we gain by such manner of description, except to confuse terms? I cannot imagine any manner of thinking more hostile to real observation in regard to what men do feel and aim at in their action. As

men had to observe and learn a vast deal about the physical world in general before they could come to any fit notion of the constitution of water, which at first they so coolly assumed as the known substratum of everything, so in my view it is with happiness. We shall understand man's happiness in the general advance of moral knowledge, and as we come to know more of man's life. Such was very much the view of the greatest of philosophers, Aristotle, with whom happiness is a thing most real, but most imperfectly conceived, waiting in fact to be filled out by experience of actual human life, of which it was in his view a quality, feature, function, or however we like to describe it. But where he feared to tread Epicureans speedily rushed in, and described happiness as simple pleasure or enjoyment, and utilitarians have followed in their steps.

We must recur to Aristotle's moral biology, combining the positive and the ideal, and maintaining for the *art* of living an imperative character as opposed to the indicative mood of *science*.

As I have mentioned then about human progress in general, that nothing is more necessary for it than every now and then 'reculer pour mieux sauter[1]', to bathe itself afresh in the waters of its youth, so is this specially the case with morals, the science (if so we call it) of human progress. We must recur in many respects to the method proposed for it, vaguely indeed, by Aristotle, which we might call the method of moral biology. We must expand and develop the notions *εὐζωία*, *εὐπραξία*, living well, doing well in life, observing that in each such term there are two elements, the ideal element represented by the *εὖ*, well, and the positive element represented by the living, doing, faring, which of course must be understood in subordination to the conditions of human nature. We must have in our minds an ideal, more or less, of human life lived well, before we can have any real notion of human improvement. That

[1] See above, p. 305.

'well,' in the phrase I have just used, means 'as it should be' is clear, but carries us on no further in the notion, since this 'should be' is involved in the speaking of 'an ideal.' Morals is, properly speaking, the 'ars artium,' the great art of living; an art differing from other arts in respect that, owing to the height and generality of the ideal it has before it, this cannot be described and presented in the manner in which the ideals of other arts can. What is of most importance, in regard to it, is to press upon the attention this 'should be,' or absolute 'ought to be'; in other words, the *imperative* character of morals, as contradistinguished from the *indicative* mood of science; the fact well urged by Aristotle, that morals have relation to what *is to be done*[1], not to what *is;* that they constitute an art to which a science or sciences may be subordinate, not a science upon which an art or arts may be founded. Unless this is done, there arise in people entirely different apprehensions as to what they are talking about; what is a method of proof with one person has nothing at all of that character with another.

Morality involves a faith in the coincidence of the various formal notions of rightness in human conduct.

There is a difficulty of course in fixing the notion 'as it should be' *formally*, that is, in reference to the meaning which it carries with it, not in reference to the conduct to which it is applicable: and the manner in which we understand it in the former reference may have effects as to the latter. Thus we may consider the formal notion of rightness of human conduct to be that it is the conduct which it was intended by man's Creator that man should pursue, or that it is the conduct which nature, however we

[1] Compare such a passage as *Eth. Nic.* II. 2, Ἐπεὶ οὖν ἡ παροῦσα πραγματεία οὐ θεωρίας ἕνεκά ἐστιν ὥσπερ αἱ ἄλλαι (οὐ γὰρ ἵν' εἰδῶμεν τί ἐστιν ἡ ἀρετὴ σκεπτόμεθα, ἀλλ' ἵν' ἀγαθοὶ γενώμεθα, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲν ἂν ἦν ὄφελος αὐτῆς), ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι σκέψασθαι τὰ περὶ τὰς πράξεις. πῶς πρακτέον αὐτάς. Ed.

may understand that word, dictates to him, or that human nature has a part belonging to it, and each individual a particular part, in the whole mass of action which *ought to be*. Which out of these and various other possible suppositions may represent the formal notion, or actual meaning, of 'what should be,' we perhaps cannot tell, but we know that the notion is applicable to the conduct which each of these, as well as various other suppositions, would dictate to us, so far as they dictate any conduct. And certainly the notion is applicable to conduct of any kind, so far as it will, more than other conduct, produce man's happiness; under the reservation that there may be other things to be considered as well; or else with the supposition, which in fact we must make in order to reason to any purpose about morals at all, that the moral system of things is a good and complete whole, that on the whole what we ought to do and what we wish to enjoy or have, our duties and our wants, will in the end be found in harmony with each other. Without a supposition or a faith of this kind, it does not seem to me that there can be anything at all answering to what we call morals. Unless we may suppose that all the things which can influence our action are capable, in the nature of them, of being put together in thought as a whole (which is really an *a priori* supposition), I do not see how we can talk of any reason why we should do one thing more than another. We want something in the world of action analogous to what truth is in the world of intellect—something universal and the same to all. There must be right action as well as true thought: and no doubt this right action, *amongst other characters of it*, must be productive of happiness.

The history of moral philosophy is a record of Human nature

itself protests against a mere Epicurean interpretation of the ideal.

the various ways in which philosophers, generally with a certain degree of confusion as to whether they were giving the *meaning* of 'should be,' or describing the kind of *conduct* (as distinguished from other conduct) to which the term was applicable[1], have explained 'well' or 'should be' in the phrase which I have given. A simple and ready answer of course was that, to the readiness of which language itself may be said to bear witness, namely, that living well or doing well in life meant simply pleasure and material prosperity. This is the Epicureanism to which, rather than to the philanthropic elements which he unites with it, Mr Mill seems to take a pleasure in referring the parentage of utilitarianism. I think it may be said, that human nature itself has always protested against the notion that this is πᾶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος, the whole duty, or business, or life, of man. Even the merely positive, or matter-of-fact, contemplation of human life leads thus to a consideration of the insufficiency of Epicureanism or utilitarianism, on the ground that it leaves unnoticed much that we actually see in human nature. Every part of our nature—feeling, reason, imagination alike—suggest to us that we are made not only for self-enjoyment but for improvement, for a range of thought and feeling going beyond ourselves and tending more and more to embrace the welfare and interests of others; and suggest also that in this we not only find *fact*, but that which is absolutely desirable, that which *should be*.

Pleasure is properly an accompaniment of health and is not meant to

To the philosopher who would make *pleasure* the proper aim of life, the moralist might use the same kind of language as the physician might use in reference to bodily pleasure—'Pleasure, so far as

[1] In Mr Mill's language the 'connotation' or the 'denotation' of the term. Ed.

man is master of it, means simply health: take care of that, and the pleasure will take care of itself: any pleasure expressly sought and indulged in will more or less disturb this, and really be more akin to, and productive of, pain than pleasure.' This notion pervaded the ancient moral philosophy of all schools; though it seems to me that in respect of it the Epicurean was a harder, as well as a more unreasonable philosophy than the Stoic. The former recommended mental health, which could not be without self-denial, for the sake of pleasure, the latter for its own sake. In the eyes of the latter it was something better than pleasure, including and necessarily producing it. And surely this is so.

be made the distinct aim of life.

But even to the philosopher who would make mental health and welfare the aim of life, the moralist might speak, as I suppose the best physicians would in regard to the body—'Care of health is not the whole of life or the entire aim of it: nor is health likely to be the better in the mass of cases for such express and exclusive care: it will be best consulted if the body, and each part of it, does its proper work and business.' And the work and business of the collective human race, it seems to me, is self-improvement; for the sake of the glory of God, if we take a religious view; for its own sake, if we do not. That man has the power of such self-improvement, both materially and morally, I have tried to show. And as his efforts to promote this must be the best manner of his pleasing God, so we must believe also that his past efforts towards it, and such success as he has had, have been under the direction of God's Providence.

Even health of the mind is not a sufficient aim. It is best promoted, as health of the body is, by doing our proper work for its own sake.

Utilitarianism, if it is really philanthropic, gives up the simply Epicurean idea that a man's own happiness is to be the only real object of life, the

Philanthropic utilitarianism identifies happiness

with pleasure in the case of others, but not in a man's own case.

happiness of others, so far as he consults it, being looked at as the road to this. The philanthropic utilitarian disclaims happiness as his own object in life, at the very moment that he lays it down as a philosophical principle that it must be the sole object of life in general, or in the case of others. Yet if he feels for himself that the happiness which he most desires is not such as he will have sought directly for itself, but such as will have resulted from a consciousness of his doing what he should do, and from the success of his efforts to do man's proper work (a work for others as well as for himself), why should he not consider that in *all* cases, in the case of others as well as of himself, it is this state of mind or manner of life (of which happiness is a circumstance and result) which is the good and desirable, not happiness as pursued for itself in the character of pleasure?

The true ideal exalts individuality no less than social feeling, and extends to others the same conception of happiness which we have for ourselves.

The fact is that in the increase of the ideal element the social and the individual feelings have to be exalted in conjunction: the one will not be properly exalted without the other. In respect of conscious purpose and view we may, if we like, describe morality as self-forgetfulness and regard for the happiness of others: but we must remember that with the self-forgetfulness there is a very great self-development; individual character is largely brought out; and unless this is so, the social feelings are merely weak and ineffective. And the exaltation thus of the individuality, or in other words, of the view of life of the agent, cannot fail to exalt his ideal of the happiness of others, or of the work to be done for them: he would wish for them not *any* so-called happiness, but the worthiest and the best. And again, the self-forgetfulness as to the object of action will be, under these circumstances, accompanied with

abundant self-thoughtfulness as to the manner: with a higher feeling of responsibility, a quicker sense of what is worthy and honourable. The ideal thus expands and is elevated on both sides; both in reference to the moral value of man, and in reference to the improvement, moral and material, of his condition.

The ancient philosophers, in their way, brought out the moral value of man very much, and stirred and exalted his individuality. In setting courage, to the extent to which they did, at the head of the virtues, and in describing happiness (the ideally perfect human state and the end to be striven after,) as consisting in the worthy action of the inward man and the proper balance of his powers, they brought strength enough to this side. The question to be asked of them was, *Will* all this individual self be brought out unless there is a worthy object of action *beyond* self? Stoicism first, and afterwards Christianity in a far greater degree, added to this individual ideal a worthy object in the happiness and elevation of others. Utilitarianism has done good service in bringing out and illustrating parts of this *latter* ideal: but in so doing it has lost ground on the other side. Full of the idea of the general happiness, it has neglected that of individual worthiness, and the ways of producing it.

The ancient philosophers dwelt too exclusively on individual excellence, the utilitarians too exclusively on philanthropic action.

It appears therefore that the idea of a better human nature involves two ideas, like those of duty and liberty, apparently contradictory yet really working together, the idea of a fuller social feeling and of a more individual independence. The view of morality as a negation of individual will, as life for the public, for society, for mankind, has in various forms existed at all times, and been most fruitful: it has been brought out most strikingly by Christianity,

Both sides of the ideal must be developed to resist the downward tendency of our nature.

and there is beautiful utilitarian language about it in Mr Mill's papers. But what I wish to urge is that, without the parallel development along with it of individual force and of the feeling of individual moral value and responsibility, it will be left an idea and words only. Do what we will, we act, as we die, alone, and must do so. We call the action of one and another man by a common name, but in reality they are full of difference; done with different feelings; done against different temptations. The moral ideal is in the union of full and free individual choice with public or social motive: what is to be resisted being the downward tendency of our nature to mere passion and self-regard, the development of individuality really helps that of sociality, and is necessary for it.

Morality must not carry regulation so far as to discourage variety.

When we speak of the improvement of human character and action, we should not mean any attempt to make this uniform and similar in different people. The great variety of possible happiness is one thing which goes to make utilitarianism incomplete as a system of philosophy: it is only very generally and widely that the happiness which people really do act for can be exhibited and arranged. The same is the case with moral action to a certain extent: one man's happiness is not another's, nor one man's goodness another's goodness. But inasmuch as the very notion of the latter implies that it is incumbent upon us, there is more reason for going as far as we can in systematizing goodness than in systematizing happiness. Still, in so far as it definitely directs and forbids, the business of morality lies in a few rules which are themselves simple, though the application of them may sometimes be complicated and difficult. With regard to the larger portion of life, its business is, not to prescribe, but to inspire and animate: the

definite form which action inspired by it takes must depend very much on individual circumstances and character.

It is in this way that the question may be answered, which is very likely to present itself, whether what we are to expect of human action is that it should be non-moral, of itself and in the mass, regulated and restrained by morality as a law; or whether morality applies to it on the whole, and should give it its aim and purpose, as well as its law and regulation. It gives both in different ways. It gives the latter very particularly, and does in this regard tend to assimilate different forms of human action, and to diminish the variety of it, which *here* is extravagance or transgression. But the former it gives in a far more general manner. By an ideal of what man should be, we do not mean any one sort of character or civilization, to which different characters and civilizations, as they improve, converge. In this regard there is not one way of good and many ways of evil; rather the ways of good are more than those of evil, and character and civilization, as they improve, will develope into wider and richer variety. I cannot conceive any more important business of morality at the present day than to take account of this latter consideration; to guard against the temptation to estimate, as perfect or ideal improvement, what is improvement in some things but not in others, and consequently to depreciate these others, and to take pleasure in characters or in civilizations which are narrow-minded and defective.

Its chief work is to animate by supplying motive and purpose: in this way it should increase variety.

The notion of improvement is not in all particulars an agreeable one, and against it we may allow its fair charm to positivism, or the acceptance of things as they are. The charm of the latter arises

We instinctively value unaltered nature as well as im-

provement; that to which we are born as well as that which we make for ourselves.

from the supposition of it as the natural, in contradistinction to what is matter of force, consciousness, and effort. In this, as in almost all moral questions, we are at war with ourselves, and it is no use trying to mend the matter by determining to look at one side of the question only. I do not think human nature has ever, as to its feelings, decided, nor do I think it will ever find any principle on which to decide, whether to value most what is man's own creation (if I may so speak), or what is his as matter of fact and by nature. I avoid the use of religious expressions here, under the consideration that, however the latter may seem to be more particularly given us of God, yet in reality, when we take a religious view of the matter, it is equally competent to us to regard the former in the same light. The having made ourselves, or gained for ourselves, something which we think good is an independent source of self-complacency on the one side; but so also on the other is the being, or possessing, something which we think good without its being the result of our own effort; nor is it easy to find a principle on which one is to be preferred to the other. The former kind of self-complacency, which we may call the direct consciousness of merit, is the more simple: the latter is a more complicated feeling; partly inferior to the other, in so far as it arises from the consideration that, in our rivalry with others, what is ours by nature is something, for which we may indeed be envied, but in which no effort on the part of those not similarly gifted will enable them to rival us; and partly superior to it, as it arises from a reference to an imagined higher power, on which we depend, and dependence on which we feel to be an elevation of ourselves.

We do not wish

There is something sacred and noble then in

human nature to be improved out of its naturalness. We want to enjoy what is good as well as to advance towards it.

human will, but there is something sacred and noble also in that with which it is an interference. Man's will may present itself to us as something out of place and meddling; and with respect to definite morality some undercurrent of this sentiment is perhaps not unfrequent in men's minds. We do not wish human nature or character to be *improved* out of its naturalness, its picturesqueness, its untouched simplicity. We want something to contemplate and to rest in: and as in what we may call the vulgar notion of 'progress', or perpetual change, there is something really to make the head reel, so in the more reasonable notion of improvement, or tendency towards an ideal, there is something in some respects unsatisfactory. We do not want to be always making things better; and morality, when it gives out this as its business, is probably not pleasing to us in all our moods. The perpetual aim at making things better implies rather the looking at what is wanting in them, than the acquiescence in and enjoyment of what is right and good.

Morality has to take account both of individuals and of custom: how the two are viewed by religion and by the reforming and conservative utilitarianism.

Supposing that morality were done with so far as regards human custom and opinion, in consequence of these being perfect, there would still remain the question of the relation between this custom and individuals. In the main, it may be said that the object of religion is the regeneration of individuals; the object of the reforming utilitarianism the reformation of human custom; the object of the conservative utilitarianism the maintaining human custom against influences which would deprave it, and the bringing individuals up to its standard. It will be seen then what a complication there is. Human custom (so far as we may speak about it as one thing) represents a kind of mean temperature of earthly virtue, slowly we hope rising, and such as may be raised thus gra-

dually by human effort. Religion has the difficult task of condemning this as 'the world', in comparison of the regeneration which it strives to effect in individuals, while at the same time it maintains it, in the interest of morality, against the constant efforts of the lower elements of human nature to drag it down: religion has to be reforming and conservative at once. That there is much of what may fitly be called a religious spirit in some of the reforming utilitarianism, I do not wish to deny: but it fails in its too great thought of the reform of human custom and legislation, without thought enough of the moral elevation of the individual. It rests too much in a positivist view of the individual, and thinks that a better knowledge of what he is will naturally lead to an improvement in human custom. But the great reason why human custom is no better is because individuals are not: *finding* out more clearly what they *are* will not help us: what needs is a more earnest *impressing* upon them that there is something which they *should be*. Human civilized custom (in which I include opinion and legislation) is a vast mass of result of human intelligence and effort at improvement, which continually puts to shame, and has to maintain itself against, a large number of individuals who have not risen to its level. In regard to the great features of this, it is the duty of those who rise above its level to help to maintain it, as the ground already won for civilization and for good. If a man speaks with a voice from heaven, he may with authority condemn it, (as we have seen that in certain views religion does); but short of this, whatever ideal we may have formed of what such custom should be, a large portion of morality must always consist in maintaining it; and if any one fails to be mindful of this, in his zeal for

his ideal he may do human nature irreparable wrong; unless, which is more probable, he makes a momentary impression, and then what he has said remains in the history of philosophy as idle words.

In all that I have said about human improvement there are two things which I would wish considered: one, that when it is said that man improves himself, I do not mean to suppose such effort at improvement to be necessarily conscious; the other, that I do not mean to exclude the supposition of Providence and religion.

Human improvement as a whole is the result of various partial improvements arising from man's natural upward impulse. The study of past progress is only subordinately useful.

Human improvement is a thing very vast and various, and consequently such progress as is made in it is made far less by any definite efforts to promote it as a whole, than by effort to bring about minor improvements in one and another particular. But it is none the less through human effort that it is arrived at, because this effort is, as regards the individual case, partial and of limited view. The effort is still upwards and onwards, one way or another. Were there not this *spring* in man, no progress would be made. The consideration of progress or improvement as a whole, and the careful sounding of the consciousness of the human race in regard to it, are chiefly of use, not so much because man's improvement is likely to be advanced by distinct consciousness of his nature (if only there is the spring, energy, and ideal), but rather in order to guard against wrong ideas and conclusions as to what this improvement consists in, and consequent injury to the progress itself. When man's attention becomes directed, as it now is, to the past experience of this progress, in order to conclude from it as to his future action, it is exceedingly likely that such wrong ideas should arise, and most necessary that great attention should be given to the nature of

the progress in order to prevent ill effects from them.

Human improvement is providential, though the work of human will.

And when I say that human improvement is the work of man, I mean by this that it is the work of human *will* as against any idea of simply natural development, not as against the supposition, so far as we have any reason to entertain such, of superior providential direction. What I mean is as follows.

Possibly the beginnings of civilization may have been a special gift from God to man.

The actual beginnings of human civilization, like the beginnings of language, and like *origines* of every kind, are hid from our view. In regard of almost every system or course of things which exists, we find it difficult to avoid supposing, as necessary to *start* it, some action different in kind from that which operates to keep it going and develop it. Positive science struggles against this apparent necessity, and it is right it should, within its proper limits: it is its business. The 'dignus vindice nodus' does not arise (setting aside anything that may be expressly revealed) till the power of science to account for *origines* is exhausted. In respect of the beginnings of human civilization, man's self-improvement out of a savage state was a favourite imagination of philosophers some time since, very much dwelt on and variously pictured, after the manner of Lucretius or otherwise. Since then the tide of opinion has turned, and theories of the manner of conversion of man from a savage state to a social one have not been so popular: definite history has been more in favour, and surveys, accurate or not, have been made of man's actual past civilization, as it stretches away from us to the historical vanishing point; and it is observed that savage races of the present time have no tendency, in themselves, to civilize themselves, so that we have no *vera causa*, nothing actually in operation, to apply back, so as to warrant our con-

ception of man's having at some past time started himself in improvement. I am not certain, after the manner of the oscillations of opinion, that the tide may not now be tending to turn again. Without entering into this question, I wish to say that, in speaking about man's self-improvement, I would be understood as saying nothing about the *beginning* of it. When man is in some measure improved and civilized, he improves and civilizes himself, just in the same way as when he possesses language he speaks: how he came by original civilization and language in the first instance, is a question which I do not touch.

Certainly the tendency to self-improvement is God's gift, and religion has been one of the most powerful agents of civilization.

The principle which I have gone upon is, that the nature of man contains within it the faculty of self-improvement: whether also the faculty of *originating* self-improvement, I do not say. Whether man at his creation received the beginnings of civilization, is a question which I conceive Revelation alone can answer. Here then it may well be that civilization, that is the rudiments of it, is a simple gift of God to man. And whether this be so or not, yet the power of, and tendency to, self-improvement is His gift; and religious sentiments, and still more, actually revealed religion, are among the most powerful agents of civilization.

In practice there can be no doubt that all civilization has had a great deal of religious sentiment involved in the formation of it. Of this sentiment, how much has been true, how much false, how much has been advantageous to civilization, how much inimical to it, is a matter of much discussion. I would merely say in general that, in my view, such religious sentiment as has existed upon the earth, taking account of all its forms, has been far more helpful to human improvement than it has

been the contrary: and that again in my view, in the main, the helpfulness to civilization has been in virtue of such truth as the religious sentiment has contained in it.

These then are the reservations that I make in saying that man's self-improvement is possible independently of religion. Not independently of God's creating power and His Providence, nor in such a manner as that the thought of Him is not a most powerful aid to it: but yet by man's own free will and power, without *necessary* thought of Him or reference to Him. The work of God in the matter is through human effort; by His influence leading man, in whatever way, to act in one or another manner.

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